When can I expect a diagnosis?

We make every attempt to diagnose your sample promptly. In many cases you can expect a diagnosis within 2-3 days (see the bottom of this page for turf sample information). However, there are several reasons why a diagnosis may take a week or even longer. For example:

- **Many diseases cannot be diagnosed without laboratory tests.** Most common procedures, such as incubation and culturing, take several days to complete. Particularly difficult samples may require several tests to identify or rule out potential causes.

- **Treatments with fungicides or other pesticides prior to sampling** may kill pathogens or suppress their growth. In these cases, it may take several extra days before the pathogen resumes growth so that we can identify it for diagnosis.

- In cases where **several problems appear to be present**, a pathologist, an entomologist, a crop production specialist and others may all be involved in the diagnosis and recommendations. It may take several days for all reports to be finished. You should receive interim reports as each diagnostician completes his or her work.

- **Extension Specialists diagnose many of our samples.** These NCSU faculty members have in-depth knowledge of specific crops, production systems, and management tactics that work in our area. Involving Extension Specialists assures the highest possible level of expertise in diagnosing problems of specific crops. However, Extension Specialists maintain very busy schedules and sometimes are unavailable for immediate consultation. To minimize delays, the PDIC staff conducts preliminary diagnostic tests while awaiting Specialist help.

- **Poor sample quality** may slow diagnosis. Diagnosis will be delayed if we need to request additional samples, or if soil and all plant parts were not provided in the original sample. Always provide us with the most complete sample possible. Photographs are invaluable for diagnosis and many problems can be diagnosed quickly from high-quality images.

- **Sample degradation** due to poor packaging or to delays in delivery can result in delayed diagnoses. If at all possible, mail samples early in the week so that they do not spend extra time in transit over weekends or holidays.

- In very rare cases, a sample may appear to have a pest of regulatory concern, for example, an exotic or quarantined pest. We are required to bring these samples to the attention of state and Federal pest regulatory agencies, who notify the submitter of the necessary actions. Our response is delayed until all agencies have completed their work.

You can check the status of your sample at any time from your personalized sample submission page on the PDIC website. If you have questions about the status of your sample, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone. You can also send a message by clicking on the correspondence tab in your sample record and entering your question. We will answer your questions and do our best to address any delays or problems with your sample.

**Turf samples:** Due to a high level of specialization, the [NC State Turf Diagnostics Lab](#) is able to provide rapid diagnostic services. Commercial samples are processed within 24 hours of receipt, and residential
samples are processed within 48 hours of receipt. Please note that fees for commercial turf samples are substantially higher than for other samples.