Collecting Samples for Oak Wilt Testing

Sampling for oak wilt is best done during the summer months when trees are actively exhibiting wilt symptoms.

**Stem Samples (preferred):**
Collect 4-6 stems that are about 8 to 10 inches long, about 0.5 to 1.5-inch diameter, alive but showing dieback (wilt) symptoms. The sapwood must contain vascular discoloration as shown in the photos below. Don’t confuse the normal reddish color of red oak wood with the dark brown to black streaks caused by the oak wilt fungus.

If you don’t see streaking in the sapwood we are unlikely to recover the oak wilt pathogen.

It takes at least 7 days for the fungus to develop in the lab to the point that a positive confirmation can be made. Often, a 2-week incubation is needed. **Samples must be submitted with disposable ice packs.** Temperatures in mail trucks in summer are high enough to kill this fungus in wood samples, resulting in false negative tests. Only mail samples early in the week using an overnight delivery option so they are not in transit over a weekend.