Hortus Plant Sampling Guide

This guide is intended to help ensure that the correct plant part and number of leaves required for a sap test are being collected and sent to our laboratory for testing.

This will allow for faster, more accurate testing of your sample, which in turn leads to you receiving your recommendation in the shortest turnaround time.

If you require further information please do not hesitate to call us on 07 4132 5000 to speak to one of our friendly, knowledgeable staff.
Plant Sampling

• Select the correct leaf – consult sampling guide.

• For young or small crops a larger sample will be required.

• Select an average representative area in the field for monitoring.

• Select average representative plants – avoid diseased plants.

• Collect enough sample for 5ml sap – consult manual for leaf numbers.

• Do not mix varieties in the sample as there may be some variation.

• Sample from 8am – 3pm, but monitor the same time each week.

• Do not sample immediately after rain – note heat or cold stresses.

• Note fertiliser and irrigation times and application rates if possible.
Handling and Transport

- Use plastic bags.
- Collect dry samples.
- Keep cool and “dry” (don’t freeze or sit on dash in direct sun).
- Send via the fastest form of delivery to minimise time in transit.
- Apply “Keep cool and dry” stickers if available.
- Do not over pack—compression will cause deterioration.
Please fill in all information on the Analysis Request Form (ARF). This can be done online by logging in using your unique user ID (your email address and a password). Simply register online to set up your online profile. Please indicate what sort of recommendation you require on the ARF as this will also influence the price you are charged for your results.

A detailed ARF gives us a complete understanding of the growing conditions of your crop and lets us know if you are concerned about specific problems or symptoms and allows us to address these in our recommendations. It also ensures we generate the appropriate optimal level for your particular situation.

The ARF can be completed online at www.hortus.net.au our preferred and easiest option. You can also download a single hardcopy form from our website or order a carbon copy booklet of 50 forms.
Asparagus

Take stems from the top 20cm of the plant. Take at least 30 tops, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling at fern formation; and monitor monthly to mature fern stage.
Aster

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant, or out from the crown of the plant. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take at least 70 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. Send the whole leaves to the laboratory.

Begin sampling at 10 leaf stage. Monitor fortnightly until flowering peak.
Avocado

Take the first fully expanded leaves on the latest flush. Sample at least 60 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree. Begin sampling at fruit set, then monthly to harvest, or sample by crop stage.

Usual sampling times for sap analyses are:
• early fruit set
• when fruit size is about 25 mm
• when fruit is 50 mm
• when fruit reaches mature size
Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf out from the crown of the plant. Take at least 30 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. The petiole and midrib of the leaf is required.
Take the first fully unrolled leaf out from the crown, and chop off about 25 cm of the midrib of the leaf, from where the leaf blade begins. At least 6 leaves required - the larger the sample the more representative it is of the whole block. If the sample is too bulky the midribs can be split longitudinally, and half discarded. (i.e. 12 half midribs is a better sample than 6 entire midribs, for the same volume.) Begin sampling when suckers are 2m high, and continue fortnightly or monthly as required.
Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth leaf back from the growing point of the plant. Take at least 70 leaves, randomly across the sampling area.

The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk and the midrib.

Begin sampling at 5 true leaf stage. Sample weekly or fortnightly until harvest.

Basil
Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant. The trifoliate leaf is formed of three smaller leaflets - BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaflets. Take at least 30 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. For ease of dispatching, the leaflets can be stripped off the leaf stalk and discarded. Strip the leaf blades only, leaving the whole petiole and the three smaller offshoots.

Beans begin sampling at 5 true leaf stage. Sample weekly or fortnightly to pod fill stage.
Take first fully expanded leaf out from the growing point of the plant. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take 20 to 30 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. The part to be tested is the petiole (leaf stalk) and the midrib. For ease of dispatching, the blades can be stripped off the midrib and discarded. Begin sampling at five leaf stage, continue to heading stage, weekly or fortnightly.
Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant, or out from the crown of the plant. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take at least 50 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. Send the whole leaves to the laboratory.

Begin sampling at early budding. Monitor weekly or fortnightly until harvest. Sampling of long harvest crops can continue through harvest.

**Capsicum**
It is best to sample non-fruiting terminals. Take compound leaves that are almost fully expanded on the latest flush. Sample at least 40 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree. Begin sampling at pre-flowering stage, monthly to harvest, or sample by crop stage as below.

Usual sampling times for sap analyses are -

• one month pre-flowering
• beginning of flowering
• early fruit set
• when fruit size is about 25 mm
Carnations

Take first fully expanded leaf down from the growing point of the plant. The leaf to sample is usually the third or fourth leaf. Sample the leaf back to the node of the stem. The part sampled is the whole leaf and midrib. Take at least 80 leaves, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling when first new leaves reach mature stage. Sample fortnightly or monthly.
Carrots, Turnips & Beets

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf out from the crown of the plant. Take at least 30 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. Whole leaves are required for carrots, and the midrib of beet, and parsnips etc.

Carrots: begin sampling at 5-6 leaf stage. Sample fortnightly or every three weeks to “bulking up” stage.
Take the top three nodes from the stalk from the first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf out from the crown of the plant. Take at least 30 stalks, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling at 5-6 leaf stage. Sample fortnightly or every three weeks to “pre-harvest” stage.
Chervil

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant. Take at least 50 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk and the midrib. Begin sampling at 5 true leaf stage. Sample weekly or fortnightly until harvest.
Chives

Send 20 whole plants after removing the roots. For larger plants cut the collar at the top end of the bulb, remove green leaves, and send the leaf blades. Most bulb crops can be sampled from the time of bulb formation to last fertigation.
Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the third or fourth leaf back from the growing point of the plant. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaflets. Take at least 40-50 leaves, randomly across the sampling area.

The part to be tested is the whole leaf and petiole.

Sampling should commence from the new flush in spring and continue monthly during the main growing season or while vegetative growth is being produced.

1st fully expanded leaf

Christmas Bush
Chrysanthemum

Take first fully expanded leaf down from the growing point of the plant. The leaf to sample is usually the fourth or fifth leaf down. The part sampled is the petiole and midrib. Take at least 70 leaves, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling when first new leaves reach mature stage. Sample fortnightly or monthly.
Sample non-fruiting terminals only. Take leaves that are about 3/4 expanded on the latest flush. Sample at least 40 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree.

Usual sampling times for sap analyses are:

- one month pre-flowering
- beginning of flowering
- early fruit set
- when fruit size is about 25 mm

**Monitoring program**

Begin sampling at pre-flowering stage, monthly to harvest, or sample by crop stage.
Coffee

Take the first fully expanded leaves on the latest flush. Sample at least 40 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree. Begin sampling at fruit set, then monthly to harvest, or sample by crop stage.
Coriander

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant. Take at least 50 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk and the midrib. Begin sampling at 5 true leaf stage. Sample weekly or fortnightly until harvest.
Corn

Select the first leaf with a visible dewlap. Select the thickest stalk in each stool. Take at least 20-30 leaves per sample, selected randomly through the sampling area. Avoid distorted or stunted plants. Send whole leaves from young plants, but remove the leaf tips to leave 30 cm of leaf when sampling more mature plants. Sampling can begin from about 30 cm high (V5). Sample fortnightly or as required, depending on fertigation frequency. If necessary, seedlings (V1-V4) can be sampled by sending 30 whole plants.
Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take at least 50 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. For ease of dispatching, the blades can be stripped off the leaf stalk and discarded. Send the petioles or leaf stalks to the Lab. Sampling times for cotton are:
• squaring
• 2-3 weeks later, late flowering
• 2-3 weeks later, late boll set/early boll fill
• 2-3 weeks later, mid-late boll fill
• late boll fill
Cucumber

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the runner, or out from the crown of the plant. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take at least 30 leaves, randomly across the block. Up to 50 leaves may be required if petioles are very small. The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. For ease of dispatching, the blades can be stripped off the leaf stalk and discarded.
Custard Apple

It is best to sample non-fruiting terminals. Take leaves that are about 3/4 expanded on the latest flush. Sample at least 40 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree.

Usual sampling times for are:
• one month pre-flowering
• beginning of flowering
• early fruit set
• when fruit size is about 25 mm
• when fruit size is about 75 mm
Eggplant

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant, or out from the crown of the plant. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take at least 30 leaves, randomly across the block.
The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk and the midrib of the leaf.
Begin sampling at budding, continue weekly or fortnightly until harvest.
May continue sampling during harvest.
Take the top 20cm of the plant. Take at least 30 tops, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling at budding; and monitor fortnightly to mid-harvest.
Gerberas

Take first fully expanded leaf out from the crown of the plant. This will be the leaf that is almost fully expanded and starting to change colour to a darker green. The part sampled is the petiole and midrib. Take at least 30 leaves, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling when first new leaves reach mature stage. Sample fortnightly or monthly.
Grapes

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the runner. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE PETIOLE. Take at least 60 leaves, randomly across the block and increase number if petioles are small.

The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. For ease of dispatching, the blades can be stripped off the leaves of grapes and discarded.

Begin sampling when canes are 30 cm long. Continue weekly or fortnightly to harvest. Strategic sampling times are 30 cm canes, early flowering, early fruit set, fruit fill, pre-harvest, and post-harvest.
Select the youngest fully expanded leaf back from the growing point.

BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaflets. Take at least 50 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. For ease of dispatching, the leaflets can be stripped off the leaf stalk and discarded. Begin sampling at 30cm in height. Sample fortnightly to flowering stage.
Kangaroo Paw

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the second or third leaf out from the growing point of the plant, or out from the crown of the plant. Take at least 50 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. Send the entire leaves to the laboratory.

Begin sampling when first able to sample appropriate part. Monitor monthly until flowering.
Kiwi Fruit

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the runner. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take at least 50 leaves, randomly across the block.

The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk and midrib. Begin sampling when vines reach 1 m and sample monthly until mid-harvest.
Lemon Grass

Take the first fully expanded leaf. The part to be tested is the midrib of the leaves.

Send 30 – 40 leaves from across the sampling area.
Lettuce & Cabbage

Take wrapper leaf, close to head maturity. Take at least 15 leaves, randomly across the block. The part to be tested is the midrib of the leaf. For ease of dispatching, the blades can be stripped off the midrib and discarded.

Begin sampling at 3-4 weeks and sample weekly or fortnightly until two weeks before harvest.
Loquats

Sample non-fruiting terminals only. Take leaves that are almost fully expanded on the latest flush. Sample at least 50 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree. Begin sampling at early fruit set, then monthly to harvest, or sample by crop stage. Usual sampling times for sap analyses are -
• one month pre-flowering
• beginning of flowering
• early fruit set
• at fruit fill stage
Lucerne

Take the top 20cm of the plant. Take at least 30 tops, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling at budding; and monitor fortnightly to mid-harvest.
Sample non-fruiting terminals only. Take leaves that are almost fully expanded on the latest flush. Sample at least 200 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree.

Begin sampling at pre-flowering stage, monthly to harvest, or sample by crop stage as below.

Usual sampling times for sap analyses are -
- one month pre-flowering
- beginning of flowering
- early fruit set
- when fruit size is about 25 mm
Take the first fully expanded leaves on the latest flush. Sample at least 200 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree. Begin sampling at fruit set, then monthly to harvest, or sample by crop stage. Usual sampling times for sap analyses are:

- early fruit set
- when fruit size is about 25 mm
- when fruit is 50 mm
- when fruit reaches mature size

First fully expanded leaf
Sample non-fruiting terminals only. Take leaves that are about 3/4 expanded on the latest flush. Sample at least 70 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree. Begin sampling at early fruit set, then monthly to harvest, or sample by crop stage.

Usual sampling times for sap analyses are:
- one month pre-flowering
- beginning of flowering
- early fruit set
- when fruit size is about 25 mm
- at fruit fill stage

1st fully expanded leaf

Mango
Mint

Take the top 20cm of the plant. Take at least 30 tops, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling at budding; and monitor fortnightly to mid-harvest.
Olives

Sample non-fruiting terminals only. Take leaves that are fully expanded on the latest flush. Sample at least 70 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree.

**Monitoring program**

Begin sampling when first leaves of new flush reach maturity. Sample fortnightly or monthly to peak harvest.
For spring onions and young onions, send 20 whole plants after removing the leaf tips and roots. Be sure to include the collar at the base of the leaf, as this is the part to be tested. For larger plants cut the collar at the top end of the bulb, remove green leaves, and send the collars. 15 - 20 collars is enough. Most bulb crops can be sampled from the time of bulb formation to last fertigation.
Parsley

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant. Take at least 50 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk and the midrib. Begin sampling at 5 true leaf stage. Sample weekly or fortnightly until harvest.
Passionfruit

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the runner. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take at least 70 leaves, randomly across the block.

The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk and midrib. Begin sampling when vines reach 1 m and sample monthly until mid-harvest.
Take the youngest fully expanded leaf out from the crown, and remove the petiole. At least 10 petioles required. Petioles should be approximately 25 cm long. Leaf blades can be removed before dispatching sample. Sample from budding, monthly to harvest.
Take the first fully expanded leaf from the growing tip of the plant. The trifoliate leaf is formed of three smaller leaflets – BE SURE TO TAKE THE WHOLE LEAF AND PETIOLE, not just the leaflets. Take at least 50 leaves randomly across the sampling area. The part to be tested is the petiole or leaf stalk. For ease of dispatching the leaflets can be stripped off and discarded. Strip the leaf blades only leaving the petiole and the three smaller offshoots. Begin sampling when the first new leaves reach the mature stage. Sample every 2-4 weeks until the plants start to shut down. Important times are pre-flowering, pegging and nut sizing.
Peas & Snow Peas

Take the top 20cm of the plant. Take at least 30 tops, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling at budding; and monitor fortnightly to mid-harvest.
Sample non-fruiting terminals only. Take leaves that are fully expanded on the latest flush. Sample at least 50 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree.

Monitoring program

Begin sampling when first leaves of new flush reach maturity. Sample fortnightly or monthly to peak harvest.
Potato

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant. The compound leaf is formed of several/many smaller leaflets - BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaflets.

Take at least 30 leaves, randomly across the sampling area.

The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. In potatoes, this should be from 15 to 30 cm long, depending on the stage of the crop. For ease of dispatching, the leaflets can be stripped off the leaf stalk and discarded.

Begin sampling at 4-5 leaf stage.

Sample fortnightly to “bulking up” stage.
Take the stalk from the first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf out from the crown of the plant. Take at least 30 stalks, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling at 5-6 leaf stage. Sample fortnightly or every three weeks to "pre-harvest" stage.
Rocket

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant. Take at least 50 leaves, randomly across the sampling area. The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk and the midrib. Begin sampling at 5 true leaf stage. Sample weekly or fortnightly until harvest.
Take first fully expanded leaf from the growing point of the plant. The compound leaf is formed of five smaller leaflets - BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaflets. Take at least 50 leaves, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling when first new leaves reach mature stage. Sample fortnightly or monthly.

Rose

Take the whole compound leaf
Take the top 10-20 cm of the new growth. Take at least 20 to 30 tops, randomly across the sampling area.
Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take at least 40 leaves, randomly across the block. The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. For ease of dispatching, the blades can be stripped off the leaf stalk and discarded.

Begin when the plant begins to start significant vertical growth and continue every 2 - 4 weeks until harvest.
Sample non-fruiting terminals only. Take leaves that are fully expanded on the latest flush. Sample at least 30 leaves through the orchard, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height, at up to three different points around the tree.

**Monitoring program**
Begin sampling when first leaves of new flush reach maturity. Sample fortnightly or monthly to peak harvest.
Take first fully expanded leaf out from the crown of the plant. The trifoliate leaf is formed of three smaller leaflets - BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF AND PETIOLE, not just the leaflets. Take at least 70 leaves, randomly across the sampling area.

The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. For ease of dispatching, the leaflets can be stripped off the stalk and discarded. Strip the leaf blades only, leaving the whole petiole and the three smaller offshoots. Begin sampling when first new leaves reach mature stage. Sample fortnightly until the end of the main harvest period.
Select the first leaf with a visible dewlap. Select the thickest stalk in each stool. Take at least 20-30 leaves per sample, selected randomly through the sampling area. Avoid distorted or stunted plants.

Send whole leaves from young plants, but remove the leaf tips to leave 30 cm of leaf when sampling more mature plants.

Sampling can begin from about 30 cm high, in conjunction with “Quick Soil” test. Sample fortnightly or as required, depending on fertigation frequency. If necessary, seedlings can be sampled by sending 30 whole plants.
Sweet Potato

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant, or out from the crown of the plant. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take at least 50 leaves, randomly across the block. The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. For ease of dispatching, the blades can be stripped off the leaf stalk and discarded.

Begin when runners are 50 cm long, continue fortnightly to bulking up.
Tarragon

Take the top 20cm of the plant. Take at least 30 tops, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling at budding; and monitor fortnightly to mid-harvest.
Take leaves that are about 3/4 expanded on the latest flush. Sample at least 80 leaves through the plantation, no more than 3 per tree. Sample at about shoulder height if possible, (or from limbs that have been recently removed) at up to three different points around the tree.

Usual sampling times for sap analyses are -
• as required during main growing period of the year
• main sampling period is during the first 2-4 years of tree establishment
Tomato

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the plant. The compound leaf is formed of several/many smaller leaflets - BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaflets. Take at least 30 leaves, randomly across the block. The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. In tomatoes, this should be from 15 to 30 cm long, depending on the stage of the crop. For ease of dispatching, the leaflets should be stripped off the leaf stalk and discarded.

Tomatoes begin sampling at first flowering, continue weekly or fortnightly until harvest. May continue sampling trellised crops after harvest has begun.
Take the top 5-10 cm of the new growth. Take at least 40 to 50 tops, randomly across the sampling area.
Vine Cucurbitis

Watermelon, rockmelon, honeydew & pumpkin.

First fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the runner, or out from the crown of the plant. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take at least 30 leaves, randomly across the block. Up to 50 leaves may be required if petioles are very small.

The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. For ease of dispatching, the blades can be stripped off the leaf stalk and discarded.
Take the top 20cm of the plant. Take at least 30 tops, randomly across the sampling area.

Begin sampling at budding; and monitor fortnightly to mid-harvest.
Wheat, Barley & Oats (early stage)

Sample the whole above ground part of the plant. The whole plant is sampled up until tillering begins. Send 75-100 plants per sample, selected randomly through the sampling area. Avoid distorted or stunted plants in the sampling area. Usually a single sample is sufficient from this growth stage.
Wheat, Barley & Oats (tillering)

Sample the first fully expanded leaf and sheath with a visible dewlap. This part is sampled up until the flag leaf emerges. Send 75-100 leaves per sample, selected randomly through the sampling area. Avoid distorted or stunted plants in the sampling area. Usually a single sample is sufficient from this growth stage.
Sample the flag leaf and sheath down to the last node. The flag leaf will be the final leaf that emerges before the grain head emerges. Send 75-100 leaves per sample, selected randomly through the sampling area. Avoid distorted or stunted plants in the sampling area.

Usually a single sample is sufficient from this growth stage.
Zucchini & Squash

Take first fully expanded leaf - usually the fourth or fifth leaf back from the growing point of the runner, or out from the crown of the plant. BE SURE TO TAKE WHOLE LEAF, not just the leaf blade. Take at least 30 leaves, randomly across the block. Up to 50 leaves may be required if petioles are very small. No more than 20 leaves may be required for zucchinis.

The part to be tested is the petiole, or leaf stalk. For ease of dispatching, the blades can be stripped off the leaf stalk and discarded.