



Phytophthora Root Rot

About Phytophthora Root Rot

Phytophthora root rot is caused by a soil inhabiting water mold fungus called Phytophthora, which causes wilt and root rot of plants. The disease favors high soil moisture and temperatures of 80°F and more.

Damage

Plants affected by Phytophthora root rot look drought stressed (e.g., drooping of leaves). On poorly drained soils, plants wilt and die rapidly especially as temperatures rise. Roots become discolored and die. The roots of tomatoes and eggplants develop water-soaked spots that dry out and turn brown as the disease develops.

Solutions

The most important factor in reducing Phytophthora rot is good water management.

Cultural control

1. Avoid prolonged saturation of the soil or standing water,
2. Ensure planting sites are well-drained.
3. Do not give more water than necessary,
4. If infection occurs, rotate to other non susceptible crops for at least one or two seasons.

Chemical control The most effective way of preventing Phytophthora rot diseases is to provide good drainage and to practice good water management. While some fungicides may be available, do not rely on fungicide applications alone to control root and crown rot diseases. If applying, follow the labels and treat carefully.



Phytophthora can cause leaf discoloration



Infected roots become stunted and discolored (photo DH Hall)

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Reference: Statewide IPM Program, Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/index.html>

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