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Corn: Root, stalk, and ear rots

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful plant problem management.

Biology

Several fungi cause rots of roots, stalks, and ears of corn. These fungi may be carried on the seed, and may result in poor germination and seedling death. Roots show brown decayed spots. As the disease progresses, it moves from roots into the crown and is often associated with stalk and ear rots. The stalks are weakened and may break. Plants may die prematurely. The inside of affected stalks is typically discolored and rotted. Ear rot is typically seen as white, gray, pinkish, or dark fungal growth over the kernels. The fungi may overwinter in the soil or on plant debris.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Plant disease-free or treated seed.
- ~ Rotate crops. Do not plant corn in the same location each year.
- ~ Plant in well-drained soils and provide proper culture. Moisture stress can increase incidence of disease.
- ~ Do not overfertilize. High levels of nitrogen encourage disease.
- ~ Remove infected plants and plant debris from the garden. Destroy or discard (do not compost) diseased materials.

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides

None recommended

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Images



~ Caption: Corn stalk rot
~ Photo by: OSU slide library



~ Caption: Corn ear rot
~ Photo by: OSU slide library