

(revision date:6/3/2014)

## ***Corn: Seed rot and seedling blight (damping-off)***

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

### ***Biology***

Several fungi can cause seed rots and seedling blights of corn. These can be carried on the seed, or can overwinter in the soil or infected plant debris. Seeds planted in cold soils may rot without germinating or the seedlings may die prior to emerging from the soil. Seeds planted in warmer soils typically germinate, but the emerging seedlings may be stunted and have brown, rotted roots and crowns. Seed rots and seedling blights are more of a problem in cold soils with poor drainage, and in conjunction with overwatering. Seedling blight and damping-off are typically considered the same disease. However, the name 'damping-off' is often used when infection is severe enough to kill the seedlings.

### ***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 warm, well-drained soils.
- ~ Do not overwater.
- ~ Remove plant debris from the garden. Destroy or discard (do not compost) diseased plant 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: Damping-off of cucumber seedlings  
~ Photo by: R.S. Byther



~ Caption: Damping off of seedlings  
~ Photo by: R.S. Byther



~ Caption: Damping-off of seedlings  
~ Photo by: R.S. Byther



~ Caption: Damping off of petunia seedlings  
~ Photo by: R.S. Byther