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Common Diseases: Dodder

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

Biology

The parasitic flowering plant dodder (*Cuscuta* spp.) attacks living plants by entwining them in its slender stems. Dodder is characterized by its tangle of leafless, yellow to orange threadlike stems. The stems encircle host plants and steal nutrients and water from the host via modified roots called haustoria. Dodder growth and development is favored by high temperatures and full sunlight. Tiny white, pink, or yellowish flower clusters appear in June; seeds are produced from midsummer until frost kills the plant. Dodder seeds are gray to brown, irregularly round with a rough surface texture, and similar in density to clover and alfalfa seed, which are favored host plants. Seed may be spread by irrigation water, in manure, or by physical transfer by humans or animals. Dodder seed can remain viable in the soil for 20 years.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Plant seed free of dodder.
- ~ Do not spread manure or hay with dodder in it.
- ~ Pull and destroy dodder-infested plants before the parasite develops seed.

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: Dodder on fuchsia
~ Photo by: R.S. Byther