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Common Diseases: Damping-off

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

Biology

Damping-off is caused by fungi that remain in the soil for long periods of time. Infected seeds decay without germinating. Seedlings may be infected and fail to emerge from the soil. Emerging seedlings are also attacked, causing them to wilt and topple over. Water-soaked or brownish lesions are often visible on the stem at the soil line. Plants become more resistant to attack as they mature. Damping-off fungi are more of a problem in cold soils with poor drainage, and in conjunction with overwatering.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Do not overwater.
- ~ Do not plant in soils known to be infested with damping-off fungi.
- ~ Fertilize by placing a band of phosphate fertilizer 1" beneath the seed, covering with soil, then seeding rows.
- ~ Mulch to help raise soil temperature.
- ~ Plant in warm, well-drained soils during warm, dry weather.
- ~ Plant shallowly to encourage quick seedling emergence and growth.

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

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

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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