



Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Lettuce *Sclerotinia* collar rot (129)



Photo 1. *Sclerotinia* on soybean. Note the fungus has destroyed the roots of these three plants, and large balls of the fungus called sclerotia have formed on the stem and tap root. These will germinate to produce a mushroom-like body that produces spores.



Photo 2. Severe wilt of lettuce caused by *Sclerotinia* soft rot fungus. The fungus produces sclerotia (see Photo 1) and these can survive in the soil for many years.



Photo 3. Close up of lettuce showing the basal rot, with the cottony growth of the soft-rot fungus, *Sclerotinia*.

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. On many vegetables, fruit and field crops. Important disease in sub-tropical countries.
- Cottony growth causes rots of roots, stems, leaves and fruits; also, damping-off. Black, survival bodies (“sclerotia”) form, later producing a toadstool and liberating spores infecting dying leaves and flowers.
- Cultural countries: wide spacing; trellis; prune lower leaves/branches; crop rotation; soil sterilisation; add manures; mulch, do not harvest and pack in wet weather; plough in trash or collect and burn.
- Chemical control: seed treatments: thiram or captan; in the field: benzimidazole, strobilurin or triazole fungicides.

Common Name

Cottony soft rot, *Sclerotinia* soft rot, collar rot, white mould, lettuce drop.

Scientific Name

Sclerotinia sclerotiorum

AUTHOR Grahame Jackson

Information (and Photo 1) from *Diseases of vegetable crops in Australia* (2010). Editors, Denis Persley, Tony Cooke, Susan House. CSIRO Publishing. Photos 2&3 Kohler F, Pellegrin F, Jackson G, McKenzie E (1997) *Diseases of cultivated crops in Pacific Island countries*. South Pacific Commission. Pirie Printers Pty Limited, Canberra, Australia.

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