



Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Potato soft rot (296)



Photo 1. Bacterial soft rot of potato, caused by *Pectobacterium carotovora* subsp. *carotovora*.

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. On potato, brassicas, capsicum, carrot, aroids, ornamentals and more. Important bacterial diseases.
- Three kinds: (i) soft rots in seed, brown with black margin, (ii) stem rots (uncommon); (iii) wet rots in storage. Spread in ground water, and trade in tubers.
- Cultural control: certified seed; treat cutting tools (bleach); field drainage; avoid excessive N; avoid irrigation until emergence; avoid harvest when wet, and avoid wounds; harvest 7-10 days after vine are dead; avoid washing tubers before storage; store at 12-15°C for 1-2 weeks, and then at 10°C.
- Chemical control: none recommended.

Common Name

Bacterial soft rot

Scientific Name

Pectobacterium carotovorum subsp. *carotovorum* (previously, *Erwinia carotovora* subsp. *carotovora*). There are other, related, bacteria species causing stem and tuber rots in potato, most importantly "black leg" caused by *Pectobacterium atrosepticum*, and *Erwinia chrysanthemi* (renamed *Dickeya chrysanthemi*) causing tuber rots, particularly in tropical countries.

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Information from *Diseases of vegetable crops in Australia* (2010). Editors, Denis Persley, Tony Cooke, Susan House. CSIRO Publishing; and from *Bacterial rots of potato tubers* (2009) Plant Fact sheets. The Food and Environment Research Agency, Sand Hutton, York, UK. (<http://fera.co.uk/news/resources/documents/pests-disease-bacterialRotsPotato.pdf>). Photo 1 Gerald Holmes, California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, Bugwood.org

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