

Cowpea Cercospora leaf spot (303)

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. On food legume, e.g., cowpea, French and mung beans. Pod numbers and seeds reduced on susceptible varieties.
- Reddish-brown fungal spots, up to 15 mm diameter, circular to angular, merging, often with a yellow halo. Leaves fall early.
- Spread by spores blown in wind, and splashed in rain. Survival is in debris left after harvest, and on alternative hosts.
- Cultural control: certified seed or seed with plant debris removed; interplant e.g., cowpea with maize or sorghum; remove volunteers; plant away from diseased crops; collect and destroy debris after harvest; resistant varieties.
- Chemical control: use mancozeb after flowering and when pods start to develop. Use 2-3 sprays per crop.

Common Name

Cowpea Cercospora leaf spot

Scientific Name

Pseudocercospora cruenta. Previous names are *Cercospora cruenta* and *Mycosphaerella cruenta* (the sexual state). Note that some taxonomists consider that this fungus is the same as *Cercospora canescens* (see **Fact sheet no. 301**).

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Information from *Cercospora leaf spot of cowpea* Mycosphaerella cruenta. Africa Soil Health Consortium. Plantwise. (<http://africasoilhealth.cabi.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/38-legumes-cercospora-leaf-spot.pdf>); and from (including Photo 2) McKenzie E (2013) *Pseudocercospora cruenta*: PaDIL - (<http://www.padil.gov.au>). Photos 1&2 Howard F. Schwartz, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org.

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Photo 1. Top and underside of a cowpea leaf showing the large reddish brown spots *Pseudocercospora cruenta*, mostly restricted by the veins.



Photo 2. As the spots caused by *Pseudocercospora cruenta* enlarge and merge, the leaves yellow and die.



Photo 3. Powdery spores form on the spots on the underside of leaves infected by *Pseudocercospora cruenta*.

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