

Plant Disease Notes

Choanephora Wet Rot

ANR-874

Wet rot, caused by the fungus *Choanephora cucurbitarum*, is a fruit rot of summer squash.

Symptoms. Fungal mold appears on the infected area, and fruit rot rapidly. The fruit resembles a pincushion with numerous small, black-headed pins stuck in it. Initially, the heads are white to brown but turn purplish black within a few days. Affected flowers, pedicels (flower stalks), and immature fruit become water-soaked, and a soft wet rot develops. An entire fruit can rot in a 24- to 48-hour period. Symptoms usually begin on the blossom end of the fruit.

Persistence and Transmission.

The fungus overseasons on dead plant material (saprophytically) and

in a dormant spore form. In spring, fungal spores are spread to squash flowers by wind and by insects, such as bees or cucumber beetles. Infection occurs in the blossom and moves into the fruit and stem. Development of wet rot is favored by high relative humidity and excessive rainfall.

Control. There are no effective control practices available for wet rot at this time. Fungicide sprays are impractical because new blossoms open daily and need to be protected soon after opening. Under-the-foliage watering (drip irrigation) may reduce development and spread of the disease in the home garden during dry seasons.



Your Experts for Life

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For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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