

## Be on the Alert for Anthracnose on Alfalfa

**A**nthrachnose is a serious stem and crown rot disease of alfalfa that kills individual plants and causes rapid stand decline. It has been controlled in the past by plant resistance, but new pathogen types have been found. The disease may be on the increase in the Midwest.

Disease Symptoms:

- Diamond-shaped lesions near the base of the stem.
- Lesions have a straw-colored center and brown border.
- Wilting and death of the stem causes formation of a “shepherd’s crook.”
- Plants with symptoms are scattered through a field.

Anthrachnose is caused by *Colletotrichum trifolii*, a fungus that produces masses of tiny spores on infected stems and crowns. During periods of warm, rainy weather, spores are splashed from infected to healthy plants. Lesions develop on stems, causing stems to wilt and eventually die. The pathogen grows from stem tissue into the plant crown, and causes a crown rot, which ultimately kills the plant.

Please report disease observations to Deborah Samac ([dasamac@umn.edu](mailto:dasamac@umn.edu)); (612) 625-1243.

