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PLANT PATHOLOGY & MICROBIOLOGY

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WATERMELON TRANSPLANT DISEASES: GUMMY STEM BLIGHT

Gummy stem blight is a seedborne disease caused by the fungus, *Didymella bryoniae,* A few contaminated seeds can lead to widespread contamination in transplant facilities that use overhead watering.

Fig.1. Symptom development following splashing of spores onto nearby foliage.

The symptoms on leaves will first appear in an area of plants surrounding an infected seedling. The fungus will quickly reproduce, producing small, black, raised specks that will produce spores. Splashing water will spread these spores.

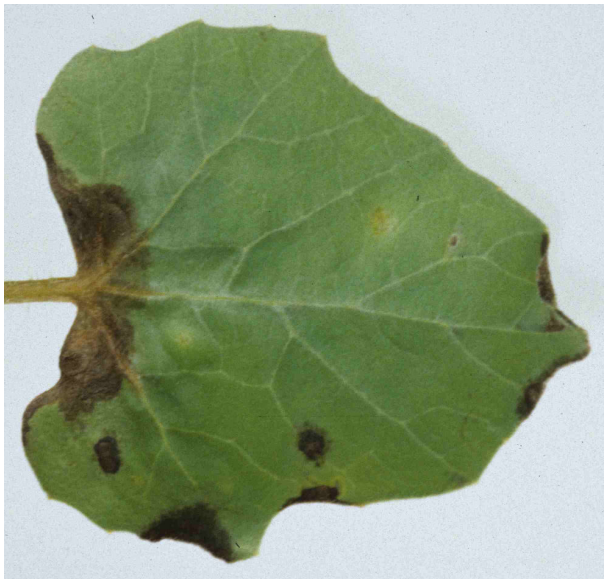

Fig. 2. Detail of symptoms on underside of leaf.

Fig. 3. Early infection on upper leaf surface.

Fig. 4. Symptoms on lower stem. Note black specks that are spore-producing structures (pycnidia), and water soaking of lower stem.

Fig. 5. Cotyledon showing black specks that are spore-producing structures (pycnidia).

Text and Photos by Dr. Thomas Isakeit, Professor and Extension Plant Pathologist
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