

PLANT DISEASE AND INSECT ADVISORY



Department Entomology and Plant Pathology
Oklahoma State University
127 Noble Research Center
Stillwater, OK 74078



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Late-Season Peanut Disease Management

John Damicone, Extension Plant Pathologist

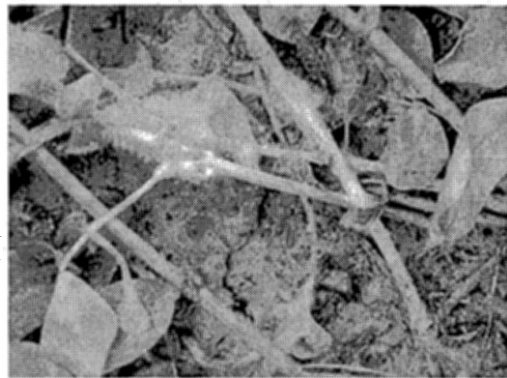
Many of the peanut fields I have recently visited have excellent yield potential. Maturity seems to be farther along this year compared to recent years when most of the crop was set in August. However, attention to management of diseases late in the season may prove critical in protecting the excellent yield prospects.



Considerable levels of early leaf spot are being carried along into the fall in many fields. Generally most are below 25% and growers do not seem concerned. Since most fields of runner varieties will not be ready for harvest until mid-October, there is still plenty of time for the disease to increase prior to harvest. The need for additional leaf spot sprays will depend on weather. Growers who leave fields unprotected during September will run a risk of losing control of the disease and yield. September is typically a month where rainfall is most abundant. Risk will be compounded should wet weather delay harvest in October.

Normally we recommend that growers forego treating fields of runner varieties after September 1 where leaf spot control is excellent (little or no leaf spot). This recommendation is made because the disease progresses more slowly on runners, and sufficient time is not available for the disease to reach damaging levels (>50% defoliation) by harvest. I would not make such a recommendation for many fields this year based on observed levels of leaf spot.

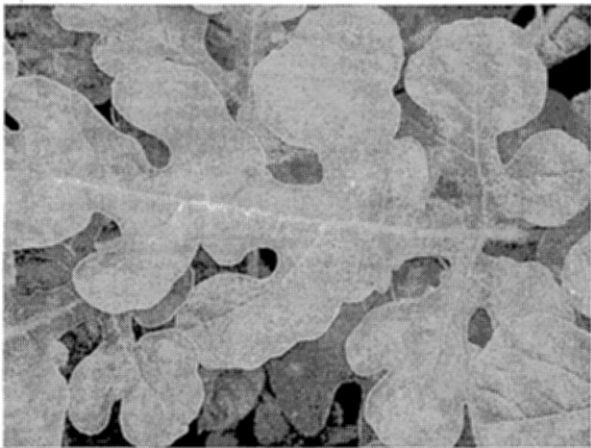
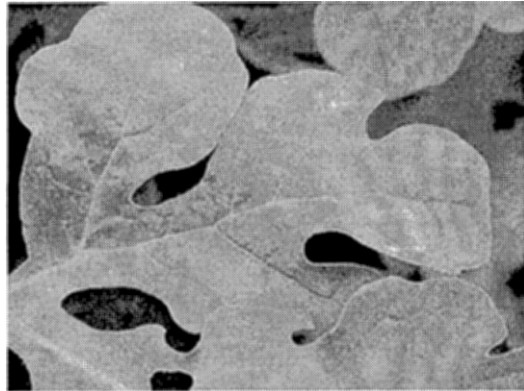
Sclerotinia blight is established in many fields in Caddo County. At the Caddo Research Station, untreated check plots are running about 10% infection. I look for the disease to increase further following the inch plus rain that was received this week. If problem fields planted to runner varieties have not received an application with Omega, now is the time make one. Expect this disease to increase as weather cools off in the fall- it always does. Effective control of Sclerotinia blight with Omega requires that application be made before, or shortly after the first appearance of disease.



Powdery Mildew in Watermelon

John Damicone, Extension Plant Pathologist

Watermelon harvest is winding down across the state. However, some growers have late-planted fields to take advantage the price rebounds that often occur after Labor Day. I observed powdery mildew beginning to develop in my test plots at the Caddo Research Station this week. I find that this disease is difficult to recognize at its early stages in watermelon because the grayish-white colonies do not contrast well with the blue-gray cast of the watermelon foliage (right). In addition, the upper leaf surface may only show yellow blotches that result from powdery mildew infection on the lower sides of the leaf (below).



Powdery mildew is favored by high humidity and moderate temperatures. The fall climate in Oklahoma is ideal for powdery mildew development because dew points are frequently reached during the late summer and fall when temperatures become cooler at night. Many growers who cultivate-late season watermelon are more concerned with the potential for downy mildew development. Downy mildew has only been reported on the East Coast this year. While downy mildew takes down the foliage more quickly, powdery mildew can also cause vine defoliation. The best fungicides for powdery mildew have been Flint, Nova, and Procure. These are systemic

(penetrant) and would be a good choice where the disease is already present. Bravo and micronized sulfur are effective as preventive treatments. However, their effectiveness is limited to areas of the foliage directly contacted by the fungicide. Therefore, fungicide deposited on one side of the leaf will not control powdery mildew on the other side.

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