

Purple Blotch



This fungal disease affects the canes of blackberries and hybrid berries and is usually a problem after a warm, damp spring.

DAMAGE

First signs are usually seen from mid to late summer when irregularly shaped dark green lesions appear on young canes. These blotches, which can measure up to 8mm in length, gradually expand to girdle the cane and during the winter and spring turn a brownish-purple in colour with a red margin. Spores are released from the infected canes and dispersed by overhead watering or rain to infect the new canes anytime from spring until late summer. This disease is usually worse near to the stool but all parts of the bush can become infected. In the fruiting year, growth of the laterals on infected canes is poor and buds may be killed.

CONTROL

In order to control the disease, damaged canes should be cut out and the new canes trained above, or away from any remaining fruiting ones. Avoid

overhead watering and keep the area around the bush free from weeds to reduce humidity. If Purple Blotch continues to be a problem consider growing two bushes and crop them alternate years to break the disease cycle. Research has shown that it is best to tie in new canes between August and early September, or to wait until February or March before doing so, as canes trained between this period are more prone to winter injury. It is also best to remove old fruiting canes immediately after harvest.