

## Redcore

Redcore is a disease of the roots of strawberries, so called because, in late autumn or spring, when affected roots are split open longitudinally, the centres, instead of being white, are reddish-brown in colour. The disease is caused by the fungus *Phytophthora fragariae* usually brought into a garden on infected uncertified runners and can remain in the soil for more than ten years. It is worse on heavy soils that are poorly drained but can also occur on lighter soils where a hard pan prevents water from draining away.



### **DAMAGE:**

First indications of the presence of Redcore occur in dry weather during May or June when a number of plants will be seen to be growing less well than their neighbours. All the leaves will have a bluish - grey tinge and the outer leaves will turn yellow, orange and red in colour. The berries ripen prematurely, are small in size and negligible in weight if the infection is severe.

### **CONTROL:**

There is no method of chemical control available. Infected plants should be removed and burned immediately, together with the soil in the vicinity of their roots. Strawberries should not be grown on that site again.

Ministry certified plants should be brought in order to reduce the risk of introducing the disease into the garden. Before planting, make sure that the soil is well drained by double digging to a depth of 45cm (18in). Heavy soils should have a tile or plastic drain installed so that surplus water is rapidly removed from the strawberry plot. If you have a heavy soil the worst effects of the disease can be avoided by planting your strawberry plants in raised beds or on 10-15cm (4-6in)

high ridges.

Consider using the table-top method for growing strawberries, whereby the plants are grown in growbags and supported above the ground on a frame. Strawberry Table-Tops are available from Ken Muir.