

Verticillium Wilt

This disease affects strawberry plants but also many other fruits, vegetables and ornamental plants. It is caused by the soil-borne fungi *Verticillium dahliae* and *V.alboatrum* and gains entry through the roots. Some crops are particularly susceptible, these are listed under the 'control' section, below. Verticillium Wilt is often worse in very hot weather.



DAMAGE

Whether it be strawberries or other fruits, the symptoms are similar, with the plants suddenly wilting. Older leaves turn reddish-brown and the undeveloped leaves, yellow. With fruit trees branches may suddenly die back. On strawberries black streaks may be seen on the leaf stalks and runner stolons, and if the crown is cut across, a dark brown discolouration of the conducting tissues will be seen. If you slice through stems of trees and canes that have been affected, these markings are visible as a brown circle, appearing just under the bark on trees and on the outer, most recent growth on canes, such as raspberries.

Severely infected plants die whilst mildly infected ones may recover and crop fairly normally in following years. Recovery seems more likely in slightly colder or wetter conditions.

CONTROL

There is no method of chemical control available. Only certified fruit stocks should be brought in, in order to reduce the risk of introducing the disease into the garden. Destroy any plants found to be infected, removing them with as much root system as possible. Care must be taken not to spread the disturbed soil from around plants onto other areas.

The full range of plants that are vulnerable to this disease is vast, however the following plants are most commonly affected and therefore planting of new fruit stocks where any of these plants have been grown should be avoided.

Tomatoes	Potatoes	Strawberries	Peppers	Melons
Cucumbers	Aubergine	Squash	Artichokes	Acer
Chrysanthemums	Carnations	Berberis	<i>Cotinus</i> ,	<i>Catalpa</i>

Strawberries should always be planted in a fresh bed, but also away from areas that have previously been used for growing potatoes or tomatoes. If this is unavoidable, strawberry varieties that are more prone to this disease such as 'Hapil' and 'Elsanta' should be avoided. Consideration should also be given to 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.