

Crown Rot

This disease affects strawberry plants and is caused by the soil borne fungus *Phytophthora Cactorum*. The disease occurs after prolonged periods of warm wet weather and is worse on poorly drained soils and when strawberries are grown under glass or in polythene tunnels.



DAMAGE

The symptoms are similar to Verticillium Wilt and are seen in mid-summer or earlier if the plants are grown under glass. First the younger leaves wilt, then the older leaves and the whole plant turns to a yellowish colour and then collapses and dies. A closer examination of the plant will reveal that both the crown as well as the lower part of the stalks of the wilting leaves have rotted. On the crown this is most evident when it is cut in half, by a brown discolouration of the tissues.

CONTROL

There are no chemicals available to the amateur gardener against this disease.

Infected plants should be removed and burnt and new plants should be planted on fresh soil, selecting a variety that is less susceptible to the disease such as Alice, Albion, Fenella, Florence or Symphony. Infection comes from the soil, but it can be introduced on infected runners therefore it is essential to plant only Ministry Certified fruit stocks to ensure that the strawberry plants are healthy in the first place.

Improve drainage on heavy soils or plant in raised beds. 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.