

Common diseases of strawberries

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Leaf scorch

Leaf scorch is common on older leaves and at the end of season, but can also affect leaf stalks, fruit stalks, flowers and fruit. This disease produces small purple spots that first appear on older leaves and gradually enlarge, join other spots and finally produce large dead patches giving the leaves a scorched appearance (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Leaf scorch.

Affected leaf margins may curl up. This disease is favoured by warm, wet growing conditions and is spread by rain splash, overhead irrigation and wind.

Disease management:

1. Avoid overhead irrigation if possible.
2. Remove and burn older infected leaves and trash from previous crops near to the new plantings.
3. Practise crop rotation.
4. Use protective sprays.
5. Plant disease free runners from an accredited producer.

Leaf spot

Leaf spot is considered a major disease under suitable conditions. It is mostly a leaf disease, but can attack both leaf and fruit stalks and also fruit.

It is identified by small reddish to purple spots, 3 to 5 mm in diameter, with light grey centre which appears on the top side of leaves (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Leaf spot.

Severe infections can kill the leaf.

The symptom on the fruit is a dark brown, sunken spot up to 3 mm wide. Leaf spot is favoured by wet, cooler conditions and is more severe in low lying or shaded areas.

The spores are spread by wind, rain splash and overhead irrigation.

Disease management:

As for Leaf scorch.