

## Disease Fact Sheet

# Didymella stem rot *Genus: Didymella lycopersici*

### What is it?

Didymella stem rot, caused by *Didymella lycopersici*, is a fungal disease affecting tomatoes in New Zealand, especially in greenhouses

### How is it transmitted?

in high-humidity environments with poor ventilation and wet leaf surfaces. Also, through crop residues, contaminated seeds or transplants.

### What symptoms to look for?

**Stems:** Dark, sunken lesions typically form on stems near the soil line or on older growth. These cankers may surround the stem, cause wilting and eventually kill the plant.

**Fruit:** Infected fruit may exhibit sunken spots, occasionally often showing concentric rings and oozing. Under humid conditions, pink to salmon-colored spore masses can develop on affected tissue.

### Impact

**Yield Loss:** Infected plants may wilt or die, reducing crop yields.

**Fruit Damage:** Causes lesions on fruit, making them unmarketable.

**Stem Cankers:** These can girdle the stem, block water flow and kill the plant.

### Where is it present?

Oceania, Europe, North America, South America, Asia, Africa

### How can I protect my plants?

Clean up: Remove infected plants and disinfect tools.

Improve airflow: Space plants well and reduce humidity.

Use drip irrigation to avoid wetting leaves.

Rotate crops: Don't plant tomatoes in the same soil each year. Check plants often for early signs like dark stem spots. Growers should consult with their horticultural suppliers for management advice.

Information compiled from

