



Phomopsis asparagi

Phomopsis Asparagi (stem blight) is a highly feared mould infection, particularly in China. The infection is so widespread in certain regions that asparagus cultivation is under threat. The mould usually appears on young shoots of 7-14 days old.

The infection is often first seen on the base of young stems just above the surface of the bed. Light brown, oval-shaped, elongated lesions with a watery edge are formed. At a later stage the lesions turn dark brown and the edge becomes more sharply defined. Black spots, the pycnidia, form in the lesion. Stem death occurs when the lesion has girdled the entire stem. The mould overwinters in plant debris and in the soil. Spores can come into contact with the stem via splashes of water or mechanical treatments.

In favourable conditions (temperature and moisture) the time from infection to discharge of new conidia may take place within 14 days. The black pycnidia in the lesions on the stems can then produce spores for up to 40 days. The short cycle and long period of the spore discharge can result in an extremely rapid spread of the infection. Under the right conditions, a cycle can be repeated 10 times a year. It is unadvisable to plant asparagus on plots where Phomopsis occurred in the past. Even seeds from infected plants can be a potential source of infection. Burning or removing the infected, dead foliage can sharply reduce the chances of the mould overwintering. Gijnlim, Grolim, Thielim and Backlim are varieties with only a moderate degree of sensitivity to infection.

Phomopsis asparagi

When yields count; Grolim

Get off to a flying start

When yields count; Grolim

In a short time after its introduction, Grolim has carved out a very strong position for itself in white asparagus cultivation. The varieties Gijnlim and Grolim jointly lead the rankings of the most widely grown varieties in Europe. Grolim is especially valued for its high stem weight and reliable yield. Grolim's high stem weight also shows hardly any decline as the plant gets older. This property makes Grolim exceptionally suitable for plots where the spear thickness can be problematic, for example on very light sandy soils or on soils where asparagus was grown in the past. Our own research has

revealed that Grolim also still produces well at planting densities of 6-8 plants per metre and that the higher the planting density, the more uniformity is shown in the thickness grades. Grolim is mainly valued by companies that want to reduce their labour costs by increasing the yield performance.

Grolim has extremely good foliage qualities. The foliage has a high resistance to foliage diseases and is virtually unsusceptible to lodging. This makes the variety very popular for organic cultivation methods.

The optimal yield is obtained from Grolim on lighter, well drained sandy soils.

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The optimal planting density is 5-6 plants per linear meter. In more productive soils use a higher planting density. In double row systems good results have been experienced with planting densities of 8-10 plants per linear metre.

Get off to a flying start

Planting asparagus for commercial growing involves great care and accuracy. It represents a high investment, one which you will hopefully be profiting from for many years to come. Mistakes made in the early stages of planting are a costly matter and may affect your annual profits to the tune of hundreds of euros in losses per hectare.

One of the first steps to be taken is selecting the site. Pay particular attention here to the highest ground water level and the possibilities of being able to irrigate. The ground water level should preferably not be higher than 1 metre below ground level. A higher ground water level means the depth of the soil available for the root system to establish in is less, which will result in a lower yield potential.

When selecting a site always take a soil sample. Try to sample at a depth that is suitable for rooting or can be made suitable for rooting. Fertilize based on the results of the sample analysis, and pay special attention to the acidity of the soil - asparagus appreciates a high pH. Clearly agree the number of plants, variety and grade with the supplier of the plants. Talking about A and B plants is not everything, it's better to discuss the number of plants per 10 kg or an average plant weight with a lower limit. Preferably choose plants with a weight

that varies between 70 and 120 grams. Heavy plants are not by definition better, it is far more important that the plants are healthy and supplied fresh.

Inspect the plants as soon as they arrive at your company. Check not only the number of plants delivered, but also examine their quality. Make sure the buds on the plants are firm and that the roots are free of moulds and not too dehydrated. Report any irregularities to your supplier immediately. Lodging a complaint with the supplier once the plants have been planted out and are already growing is not a realistic option! Plants don't necessarily need to be planted straight away provided they are stored in a cool, dry place out of any direct wind. Under these conditions plants can easily be stored for 7-10 days. If weather conditions force planting to be postponed, then it's best to store the plants in cold storage at a temperature between 2 and 5 degrees Celsius. This will prevent the plants sweating and the roots from starting to produce shoots. If the plants are stored for any length of time in cold storage (several weeks) there is a risk of dehydration. Regularly spraying the floor of the cold store with water can help alleviate the problem.

However, always immerse the plants in water before planting and add an agent

that will prevent Fusarium infection.

This preventive treatment is recommended in all circumstances. Do not force any soil treatment in unsuitable conditions; wait patiently for the right soil and weather conditions to occur naturally.

With correctly stored plants any damage will never be as much as when development is delayed because the plants were put into soil that was far too wet, for example.

After planting, cover the crowns with enough soil but limit this to around 5-10 cm. Covering the plants with too much soil will hamper rapid root establishment and early growth.

Mechanically filling the trenches during cultivation also acts as a form of weed control each time, so treat the soil with care and fill the trench in 2-3 operations. A chemical treatment to control weeds can then be applied or you can continue to control weeds mechanically.

Company information

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Information about varieties developed by us (Avalim, Backlim, Gijnlim, Grolim, Herkolim, Thielim, Vegalim and Vitalim) can be obtained from our variety specialists. They can be reached using the telephone and fax number or email address stated above.

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