Leaf scald

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Rice Fact Sheet

What it does
Leaf scald is a fungal disease caused by *Microdochium oryzae*.

Why and where it occurs
Disease development usually occurs late in the season on mature leaves and is favored by wet weather, high nitrogen fertilization, and close spacing.

It develops faster in wounded than unwounded leaves.
The sources of infection are seeds and crop stubbles. Wet weather and high doses of nitrogenous fertilizer favor the disease.

The disease is found in upland, rainfed, irrigated, and mangrove areas.

How to identify
Check the plant for the following symptoms:

- Zonate lesions of alternating light tan and dark brown starting from leaf tips or edges
- Oblong lesions with light brown halos in mature leaves
- Translucent leaf tips and margins
- Individual lesions are 1 -5 cm long and 0.5-1 cm wide or may almost cover the entire leaf. The continuous enlargement and coalescing of lesions result in blighting of a large part of the leaf blade.
- The affected areas dry out giving the leaf a scalded appearance.

In some areas, the disease has been reported to cause decay of coleoptiles, with red brown infection, root rot, and a head blight that caused considerable sterility, flower deformation and glume discoloration.

- Infected leaf tips also split near the midrib especially when there are strong wind.

Leaf scald can be confused with leaf blight. To confirm scald, visually examine the leaf for scalded appearance. Immerse cut leaves in clear water for 5-10 minutes, if no ooze comes out, then it is a leaf scald.

How to manage
- Use resistant varieties. Contact your local agriculture office for an up-to-date list of available varieties.
- Avoid high dose of fertilizer use. Apply Nitrogen in split.
- Use carbendazim and thiophanate-methyl to treat seeds.
- In the field, spraying of carbendazim 12% + mancozeb 63%WP @ 1.5g/L of water, mancozeb @2.5g/L of water.

To prevent pathogen survival across cropping seasons:
- Remove weeds.
- Plow under of rice stubbles.
- Remove infected rice ratoons.

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