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Soybean Seedling Disease Potential

Annual losses from soybean seedling blights are *not* the greatest disease yield robbers in our soybean production system (Soybean Cyst Nematode tops that list). Yet almost every year, we see *some* loss from seedling diseases like Pythium or Phytophthora. They might not be visible save for some ‘hot’ spots here and there, but if conditions are right, stand/yield losses can result.

When do we see problems? Wet weather soon after planting increases the incidence of disease pressures. We haven’t had to worry about that much this spring, but if this last storm ‘dumped’ on some of your fields, issues could arise. Compacted or poorly drained soils are also hot spots, as are areas where seedlings aren’t growing well for some reason (herbicide, etc....).

Fusarium is often associated with stressed plants. Rhizoctonia has a wide range of infection conditions, but is common when we have warm and moist (not saturated) soil conditions. Phytophthora is also an issue with warm/wet soils. Pythium prefers high soil moistures, especially poorly drained soils and flooded areas.

Sometimes, seedling blights go unnoticed. There might be part of a row missing here or a patch over there. Other times, they can be significant. If you have the latter, consider confirming the disease via a sample to the KSU Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab. With an appropriate ID in place, you can start managing seeding dates, seed treatments, and other field level factors to keep seedling diseases, and they losses they cause, from being a bigger issue than they need to be.

Orchardgrass in Cool Season Turf

As I looked down walking across some turf last week, I noted the lighter green color and rapidly growing foliage of orchardgrass. It doesn’t seem like much of a problem at first, but it *does* look just enough different it is not welcomed by most turf owners.

The positives of orchardgrass stop with: it’s a bunch grass and doesn’t spread badly. Outside of that, most of its attributes aren’t good.

It often comes in contaminated grass seed – but isn’t listed as a ‘weed seed’ because it’s a pasture grass. Make sure you try to get grass seed that is zero percent other crop seed, or orchardgrass may start to show up.

There are no herbicides control options that won’t also kill desirable turf species. Spot treating clumps with glyphosate products (always read and follow label directions...) can work so long as you understand any desirable green turf you hit will also be killed. After killed spots have turned brown, cut out the dead clumps and replace with a small piece of sod. If areas are too large to replace, it may be more practical to kill the entire lawn and start over in the fall.

Need a good ID? Check out http://kswildflower.org/grass_details.php?grassID=15 .