TOP TIPS: PLANT FUNGAL DISEASES

Redland Organic Growers Inc

Warm Season Fungal Diseases of Plants



- Be aware of the sudden rise of fungal diseases with the warm, wet weather.
- Treat powdery mildew with twice weekly foliar sprays of Ecocarb OR milk, potassium bicarb (Ecocarb) or Purecrop1, an organic allowed input.
- The incidence of tomato blight is reduced by choosing resistant heirloom tomato varieties eg Brandywine and Tommy Toe.
- Copper sprays are the organically certified application for this disease. Use sparingly.
- Anthracnose in avocados and mangoes reduces your crop. Biological controls using organisms that outcompete the fungus include *Trichoderma harzianum* and the probiotic product *Tricho-Shield* from Nutri-Tech Solutions. Studies also show garlic extract or ginger extract are effective biological controls for anthracnose when applied at 10% concentration.



Garden Hack

Milk sprays for fungal treatment are best using full cream or unpasteurised whole milk. Dilute 1 part milk to 3 parts water. Unpasteurised Bath Milk is available from Capalaba Organic Butchers.

How to manage plant fungal diseases and stop the spread



- Don't compost affected material
- Rotate crops
- Clean up and dispose of all affected plant material
- Space plants for air flow and sun
- Keep water and nutrition up to plants. Cultivate healthy, living soils
- Remove all diseased plants asap.
- Treat stored seed with *Tricho-Shield* from Nutri-Tech Solutions.

Garden Hack

Using sodium bicarb as a fungal treatment will add salt to your soil. Instead, use potassium bicarbonate (Ecocarb) which is also a plant growth nutrient.

Garden Hack

If you are using sulphur sprays to treat fungal plant disease, be aware that they are only allowed intermittently with organic approval. Do not apply when it's over 30C. Apply 10-14 days before, or after, any oil sprays.

Author Linda Brennan from Ecobotanica is an organic gardening expert and ROGI life member.

Photos: (Top left) Mango affected by anthracnose. (Bottom left) Powdery mildew on snow pea leaves. (Top right) Treat avocados before fungal disease begins to show. All photos: L.Brennan.