



## WHITE ROT ALERT

### ***White Rot of the Onion Family***

White rot caused by the fungus *Sclerotium cepivorum* has been found for the first time in Nova Scotia on garlic. White rot is one of the most destructive diseases of the onion family (*Allium* sp.) which includes onion, garlic, leek, shallots and chives.

Symptoms in the field include yellowing, dieback and wilting of leaves. A white fungal growth around the basal plate of the plant occurs. Small black sclerotia, the size of a pin head, may form in the white growth or in infected bulb tissues. In advance stages of disease, the root and bulb becomes soft and rotted due to the activity of secondary decay organisms. Bulbs may decay in storage from late season infections in the field.

This disease is very persistent in the field. Sclerotia can survive for over twenty years without a plant host. Spread of white rot is via infected sets, bulbs, cloves and movement of infested soil from field to field by machinery, wind, or water. Optimum soil temperature for disease development is 10-20°C.

Control of white rot is one of avoidance if it is not in a field. Plant only healthy transplants, bulbs or cloves. Avoid practices that can spread contaminated soil from one area to another. Clean and sanitize all equipment used in infected fields. Rotation is of limited value since sclerotia remain viable for so many years.

Due to intense garlic seed trading it is expected that other growers might have the disease in their fields.

If you are unsure whether this disease is present in your crop please contact Dr. Viliam Zvalo at 678 7722 ex 232 or email [v.zvalo@agrapoint.ca](mailto:v.zvalo@agrapoint.ca)

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