



SHEATH BLIGHT

What is sheath blight?

It is a rice disease caused by the soil-borne fungus *Rhizoctonia solani*.

What are its effects on rice?

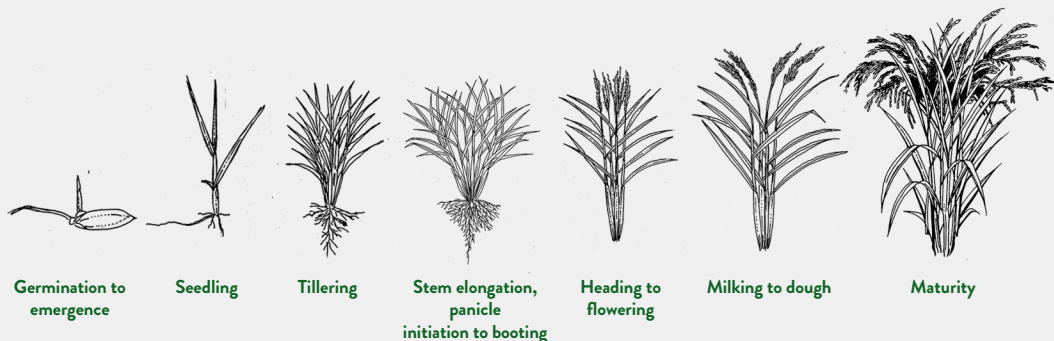
- Severe infection from heading to milking and dough stages resulting in sterile spikelets and unfilled grains, and lodging.
- Severe infection results in grain yield loss by as much as 50%.

What are the recognizable symptoms in the field?

- On leaf sheaths, oval gray spots that later enlarge; with black brown margins.
- Oval white to brown structures (sclerotia) usually appear on the sheath for severe infection.
- On leaves, irregular lesions and green-gray and water-soaked spots appear. As the lesions develop, the centers turn grayish to off-white with irregular purple brown borders.
- Symptoms can also be easily seen on flag leaves and spikelets at milking stage, especially when more than or equal to 40% of plants in the field are infected.



SUSCEPTIBLE STAGES OF RICE TO SHEATH BLIGHT



What favors its presence and development?

1. Presence of fungi in the soil
2. Planting of susceptible rice varieties
3. Low sunlight intensity, warm temperature (28-32 °C), relative humidity (85-100%), and light rain
4. Use of high-seeding rate and close plant spacing
5. Excessive N application
6. Presence of fungus in alternate hosts such as weeds in bunds and fields

How to manage sheath blight?

1. Use clean seeds of resistant rice varieties.
2. Avoid excessive N application. Split application of N fertilizer.
3. Follow recommended seeding rate and planting distance to avoid dense canopy that will favor infection.
4. Practice field sanitation by removing the weeds that serve as alternate hosts of the fungus.
5. Apply recommended fungicides as preventive measure when severe infections occur especially for varieties with histories of susceptibility to the fungus.
6. Plow dry infected stubbles.