

# Cercospora Leaf Spot in Sesame

## Recognize the problem

Sesame is an important oilseed crop. The crop suffers from many fungal, bacterial, viral and phytoplasmal diseases. *Cercospora* leaf spot, caused by the fungus *Cercospora sesami*, infects all above ground parts of the plant, resulting in complete defoliation which leads to severe economic losses. The disease, which affects leaves as early as 4 weeks after planting, starts as small pinhead-sized cottony spots on the infected leaves. These spots gradually spread on the lamina and can extend up to 4 mm in diameter. Extensive infection leads to defoliation and damage of capsules before the plant reaches maturity which can result in yield losses of 20 to 50%.

## Background

The fungal spores are spread to healthy plants through rain, irrigation water and wind. Germination occurs in humid conditions, usually during late spring and summer, and fungus growth is encouraged when leaves are frequently damp.

## Management

- Carry out field sanitation and destroy crop residues
- Treat seeds with thiram or carbendazim @ 2 g per Kg of seed
- Early planting should be done i.e. planting immediately after the onset of the monsoon
- Follow intercropping system of sesame + pearl millet (3:1)
- Use a resistant variety, such as RT-127 § Apply a foliar spray (2-3 times) of wettable sulphur 80 % wp (0.2%) at 10 day intervals from when the disease appears
- Apply three sprays of Mancozeb (0.25 %) at 15 day intervals from when disease appears

Healthy Plant of Sesamum. (Photo by TNAU Agritech Portal)



*Cercospora* leaf spot. (Photo by TNAU Agritech Portal)



When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > *Cercospora sesami*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: India