

# Vinegar sprays to control powdery mildew in okra

## Recognize the problem

Powdery mildew (Bungabunga in Bemba) is a fungal disease and a common problem in the dry and hot season. During the initial stages whitish powdery fungal spots can be seen on the leaves. When severe, the leaves become totally covered with the whitish powder, and then yellow, dried or brownish. Stems can also be affected.

## Background

Vinegar is cheap and widely available in supermarkets. It is one of the best natural agents for removing certain pests, fungi or bacteria from fresh farm produce. Therefore, vinegar may also be used to control fungi on the crop. Vinegar solution can be used to reduce powdery mildew in okra.

When 6-10 out of 100 okra plants are showing the initial spots of whitish powdery growth on the leaves, vinegar solution may be sprayed. When the problem is expected to become severe, vinegar solution sprays may not be efficient enough. When most leaves are covered with the mildew, all actions, even chemical sprays, are too late.

## Management

- Wear gloves and goggles (vinegar is irritating eyes and hands)
- By home-type vinegar
- Mix 9-10 tablespoons of vinegar with 16 litres of water into a knapsack, but do not fill completely to not spill over the solution
- Close the sprayer very well and shake
- Spray the infected Okra plants in the morning for best results. Reach good coverage on leaves.
- Do not spray at full sunshine.
- Repeat the process after 2 weeks if new symptoms appear
- If you do not have a knapsack sprayer you can use a broom, putting it into the bucket with the solution, and then transferring the solution over the plants.

Whitish powdery mildew attack on okra leaves. (Photo by Scot Nelson)



Scientific name(s) > *Podosphaera* spp., *Erysiphe* spp.

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia



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