



Darling Downs

March 2023

Welcome to the March Edition

BE ALERT – Reoccurring Wilt detected on Darling Downs

In late 2020, QLD DAF pathologists confirmed the cause of dying plants reported in Central Queensland cotton fields. The newly described disease called Reoccurring wilt, is caused by a new fungal pathogen, and in Queensland, has previously been detected in Central Queensland, St. George and the Border Rivers.

Unfortunately, this same pathogen has now been positively identified on the Darling Downs.

What can you do?

- Be aware of what is happening in your fields.
- Report any concerns or unusual symptoms to your local REO – Annabel Twine or your state cotton pathologist. A free diagnostic service is available to cotton growers and consultants. Please contact your state pathologist before sending samples.
- Ensure machinery and vehicles coming on farm are mud and trash-free to minimise the risk of pests, weeds and diseases being spread. See our [guide to effective wash-down of vehicles and machinery](#).
- Develop a farm biosecurity plan to assess the biosecurity risks specific to your farm and business, and the practices that can be implemented to minimise the risk of pests, weeds and diseases spreading on and off farm. See the [Farm Biosecurity Toolkit](#).
- Consider implementing a visitor register, asking those coming on farm about where they have been previously or additionally where your machinery is being contracted.
- For help on any of the above, contact CottonInfo biosecurity technical lead, [Sharna Holman](#) and visit the [myBMP biosecurity module](#).





Reoccurring wilt: the ute guide

Have you seen these symptoms?

- The odd plant or patches of plants that wilted and suddenly died (sporadic death) with dead leaves remaining on the plant.
- Reoccurring patches of dying plants getting larger over past seasons with no explanation for plant death i.e. seasonal conditions.
- Dying plants amongst healthy plants with varying stages of plant growth affected.
- Bronzing of leaves and petioles.
- Blackening of the stem.
- Reddening of the roots and vascular tissue.
- When the stem or tap root is cut horizontally, infected tissue may have a wedge-shaped discolouration which is reddish-grey.
- Root decay i.e. if plants are pulled out of the soil, the taproot snaps due to a dry rot.



Bronzing of leaves.



Affected plants wilt and die.



Various stages of plant growth are affected.



Sporadic plant death can occur with dying plants situation amongst healthy plants.



Wedge-shaped discolouration of diseased vascular tissue (left) and internal reddening of the tap root (right)



Plant death occurs rapidly from onset of symptoms (left); blackening of stem (centre); dry rot of tap root (right).

If you see symptoms: collect samples to get tested.

- Collect multiple samples representing all symptoms and stages of growth affected.
- If possible include a healthy plant or plants, as well as the diseased plant material
- Collect whole plant samples including roots:
 - Dig up plants rather than pull them out, as roots may be rotten and break off.
 - Keep samples cool after collection.
- Contact your local state pathologist for details on preferred methods for sending samples:

QLD:

Linda Smith – DAF

Ph: 0457 547 617

Em: linda.smith@daf.qld.gov.au

NSW:

Duy Le – NSW DPI

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Additional resources:

- [The Fast Facts: Be Wilt Aware factsheet](#)
- [CottonInfo E-alert: Reoccurring Wilt, possible new cotton disease](#)
- [CottonInfo webinar: Reoccurring wilt](#)

Dates for the Diary

- CSD Extension Xtend flex field walk and field day – Armitage Family – Wamara – Cecil Plains – 28th March 2023

Annabel Twine

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