Gram Blight

Recognize the problem
Blight is a serious disease of gram (chickpea) caused by a fungus which attacks all the above ground parts of the plant. In the beginning it appears on a few plants but under favourable weather conditions, it can cover the whole field. This disease produces small brown spots on leaves, branches and pods. Inside these spots, tiny dots which are stores of the fungus are seen. Infected leaves droop, wilt and dry-up. The infected branches also wilt and imperfect seeds are formed in pods. During severe attack, the whole field looks like it has been burnt by fire.

Background
The fungus survives on diseased plant debris and seeds. Cloudy, moist and rainy weather favours disease development, especially from January to March. The fungus is spread to healthy plants by rain and wind. It persists when infected seeds are sown and when parts of diseased plants are leftover in the field.

Management
• Do not plant chickpeas in a field or adjacent to a field where chickpeas were grown the previous 2 years. A minimum 3-year rotation is recommended.
• Bury the gram straw (Bhoosa) in the field by deep ploughing before the start of the monsoon rain
• Apply thiophanate-methyl (e.g. Topsin-M) at 2.5 gram/kg of seed or Benomyl + thiram, each at a rate of 3 g/kg of seed
• Apply a foliar spray of Chlorothalonil (720 g/L) or Mancozeb (750 g/kg) which also gives a good result against gram blight

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) > Ascochyta rabiei

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Pakistan

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