Cultural Control of Head Rot of Sunflowers

Recognize the problem
Sunflowers are an important oil seed crop in Pakistan. Head rot is therefore also important as it affects sunflower.

The disease first appears as dark spots on the back of ripening sunflower heads. This is followed by a watery soft rot that later turns dark brown.

The disease also can be recognised on the flower side of the head by the appearance of grey fuzzy matting.

As the disease progresses, the head dries out, shrivels and shreds.

Background
This is a fungal disease that resides in the soil and debris of sunflower plants.

Cultural control involves reducing the amount of disease-causing fungi in the field. The amount of this fungi, and therefore its attack on sunflower, can be minimised by destroying field debris and previous crop remains.

Management
- Destroy the debris of sunflower after harvesting. Do this by burning the sunflower residues in the field.
- Adopt crop rotation for two years. Rotate sunflower with cotton, rice or potato for two years.
- Deep ploughing the expose the soil in sun. Make sure you do this one month before the sowing of the next crop.

Scientific name(s) > Sclerotinia sclerotiorum

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Pakistan

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