Rotating common beans to control anthracnose

Recognize the problem
Anthracnose (also called common bean anthracnose), is a fungal disease. It infects common beans as well as other legumes. It affects the leaves and the pods, which results in seed infection. The disease starts on the lower leaves as small thin long patches up to ½ cm. They are dark reddish-purplish. Later the infection is observed on the upper leaf surfaces along leaf veins. Stems are also affected in severe infection, with long brown patches which appear as water soaked and sunken. This may result in breaking off the plant, or wilting.

Background
Anthracnose fungal disease spreads well in wet humid conditions. The disease survives on crop leftovers after harvesting. This is where the fungus grows to attack beans the following season. Hence, crop rotation of beans with non-host crops like cereals can reduce the disease. The disease cannot survive on such non-host crops.

Management
- After growing beans on the same field for at least two years, crop rotation should be done with non-legume crops to reduce chances of anthracnose establishment.
- If Anthracnose was detected in a bean growing season, rotation is a “must” in the next season.
- Crops to rotate should not be peas or beans. You can rotate with maize, sorghum, finger millet or African eggplant.
- Do not grow peas or beans on infected plots for two cropping seasons
- Also avoid continuous intercropping of crops with beans if anthracnose is in the area.
- Rotation of beans with a crop that has different fertilizer requirement and nutrient uptake from the soil is recommended to allow better soil nutrient management. For example, cereals.

Scientific name(s) > Colletotrichum lindemuthianum

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

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