

Sweet potato tuber rot

Recognize the problem

Sweet potato tubers may rot in the field. This is called tuber rot. The leaves and vines may also rot. As these get rotten they smell bad. They also wilt and wither.

Background

Many people think that rot is caused by ants. But this is not true. Ants are everywhere, especially in the soil, and very few of them cause disease.

Sweet potato rot is really caused by a fungus. The fungus lives in the soil, but it is too small to see. It can live from one year to the next, waiting for you to plant more sweet potatoes.

Sweet potatoes rot in the wet or rainy season. This is because the fungus likes moisture. The longer the crop stays in the soil, the more time the fungus has to attack the tubers.

Management

After you harvest your sweet potatoes, plant another crop there, like maize, millet or cassava. The fungus that causes sweet potato rot cannot attack these crops, and so the fungus will eventually disappear.

Do not plant sweet potato year after year in the same soil.

If the soil is very wet, you can loosen it with a hoe, to let in more air and light to dry out the soil, to stop the fungus rot.

You may also avoid sweet potato rot by harvesting early, before the tubers have time to rot.

Keep your sweet potatoes from rotting by hoeing the soil to let in light and air. Harvest the tubers early, before they rot.



After harvesting sweet potatoes, grow another crop, such as ground nuts, millet or maize. This helps to clean the soil of the germs that rot the sweet potato.



The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Ghana, Sierra Leone

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