

A FLOWER BLIGHT ON BIRDSFOOT TREFOIL

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A flower blight on birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus* L.) occurred in 1991, 1992, and 1993. This legume is one of the major forage crops sown in the country either for grazing and seed production purposes.

A fungus of the genus *Colletotrichum* was consistently associated and isolated from necrotic petals when wet weather prevailed during flowering onset. The fungus was sent to the International Mycological Institute in London, where it was identified and described as *Colletotrichum acutatum*, (IMI No. 353322).

Pathogenicity tests were carried out during 1993, the symptoms were reproduced and the pathogen was reisolated from the inoculated flowers. Disease may result in important economical losses as it might limit seed production. Inflorescences are mummified and practically no pods arise from infected flowers.

No reports were found of this pathogen affecting *L. corniculatus*, but it is a major fungus involved in strawberry anthracnose (causing flower blight and fruit rot).

Field studies will be conducted to determine severity and yield losses, and efficiency of commercial fungicides.