

Commercial Crop Production

Sweet Potato

Integrated Sweet Potato Disease Management

Successful management of sweet potato diseases requires the same strategies as other vegetables (see Chapter viii). Using resistant varieties, starting with clean seed stock and good sanitation practices are essential to minimizing diseases of sweet potatoes.

Use disease-resistant varieties. Select resistant varieties (Table 1) based on the disease profile for your production region.

Use virus-tested foundation seed. A combination of aphid-transmitted viruses commonly infect sweet potatoes and can significantly reduce yields by up to 25%-40% even though the symptoms they induce may be very mild. It is not yet possible to totally prevent virus infections in sweet potato but using virus-tested foundation seed and a good on-farm seed program can minimize their effects on yield. The LSU AgCenter Sweet Potato Research Station produces virus-tested foundation seed through the [LSU AgCenter Foundation Seed program](#). To learn more, contact:

Sweet Potato Research Station

LSU AgCenter
130 Sweet Potato Road
Chase, LA 71324
Phone: 318-435-2155
Fax: 318-435-2110

For most growers, it will be necessary to go through a one-year on-farm increase of planting materials from the foundation seed. The foundation seed should be bedded and the seed crops produced should be kept as far away from older virus-infected sweet potato crops as possible to reduce the rate of re-infection with viruses.

Use good sanitation practices. Several bacterial and fungal pathogens that cause sweet potato diseases (bacterial root rot, Fusarium root rot, black rot, foot rot, scurf, as well as root-knot nematode) can be carried in the roots and transmitted onto slips. The use of routine sanitation measures is an essential part of an integrated management program for controlling sweet potato diseases caused by bacteria and fungi. The following sanitation tactics should be used for disease prevention.

1. Select seed free from disease or nematode cracking.
2. Cut transplants at least one inch above the soil rather than pulling slips.
3. Bed in problem-free area and avoid repeated bedding in the same site.
4. Rotate beds and production fields on a regular basis.

Foliar fungicides. Data are lacking to suggest that fungal leaf diseases cause any significant effect on sweet potato yields in the southeastern United States. Thus, while some fungicides (Table 2) may be labeled for controlling these foliar diseases, they have not been evaluated for efficacy or crop tolerance on sweet potatoes in Louisiana. Fungicide sprays for black rot at transplanting are only recommended if black rot was observed on “seed” roots or previous year crop. To avoid the buildup of pathogens with fungicide resistance, fungicides should be alternated with fungicides with a different mode of action (see Chapter iv).

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Table 1. Sweet potato variety reactions to common diseases in Louisiana.

S = susceptible reaction, R = resistant reaction, I = intermediate reaction, - = unknown reaction.

Variety	Disease							
	Rhizopus Soft Rot	Southern Root-knot Nematode	Guava Root-knot Nematode	Soil Rot	Fusarium Wilt	Sclerotial Blight	Fusarium Root Rot	Bacterial Root Rot
Bayou Belle	R	I-R	S	I-R	R	-	-	S
Beauregard	R	S	S	R-I	R	I	R	S
Bellevue	I	HR	S	R	R	-	-	S
Bonita	S	R	S	I	I-R	-	S-I	S
Burgundy	-	R	-	I-R	R	-	-	S
Centennial	-	S	R	S	I-R	I-S	I	R
Covington	I	I-R	S	I-R	R	-	-	-
Evangeline	R	HR	I-S	I-R	R	-	R	S
Hernandez	I-S	R-I	S	R-I	I-R	-	I	R
Jewel	I	I-R	R	S	R	I	I	I
Murasaki-29	R	HR	R	I-R	R		R	
Orleans	R	S	S	R-I	R	-	R	S
Porto Rico (Unit 1)	-	I-S	-	S	S	S	R-I	R

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Table 2. Recommended pesticides, rates and pesticide use restrictions for sweet potato diseases. Consult the current specimen label for further information on each product.

Disease (Pathogen)	Product Choices ¹ and Product Mode of Action Group ²	Rate ³	PHI ⁴	Maximum Use
Bacterial Root Rot (<i>Dickeya dadantii</i>)	Sodium hypochlorite (chlorine)	100-150 ppm ⁵		1 app
Black Rot (<i>Ceratocystis fimbriata</i>)	Thiabendazole (seed root dip only) Mertect 340-F	1 107 fl oz/100 gal ^{6,12}		1 app
Foot Rot (<i>Plenodomus destruens</i>)	Thiabendazole (seed root dip only) Mertect 340-F	1 107 fl oz/100 gal ^{6,12}		1 app
Fusarium Root Rot (<i>Fusarium</i> spp.)	Proper curing at harvest, good sanitation practices, use of high-quality seed roots and prevention of wounding by controlling nematodes and insects are the most effective strategies for reducing Fusarium root rot.			
Rhizopus Soft Rot (<i>Rhizopus</i> spp.)	Dicloran Botran 5F	14 0.6 qt/100 gal		1 app ¹⁰
	Fludioxonil Scholar SC (in-line dip only)	12 16-32 fl oz/100 gal		1 app ^{10,11}
	Scholar SC (spray application only)	12 16 fl. oz/200,000 lb of sweet potatoes		1 app ¹⁵
	Bio-Save 10 LP	NA 1.1 lb/30 gal		
Sclerotial Blight (<i>Sclerotium rolfsii</i>)	Dicloran (seed root dip only) Botran 5F	14 0.6 qt/7.5 gal ⁷		1 app
	Dicloran (spray⁸ application only) Botran 5F	14 5.73 oz/14 gal ⁹		1 app
	Azoxystrobin Quadris Flowable	11 0.4-0.8 fl oz ⁹	0	120 fl. oz./A/yr
	Satori	11 0.4-0.8 fl oz ⁹	0	120 fl. oz./A/yr
	Willowood Azoxy 2SC	11 0.4-0.8 fl oz ⁹	0	123 fl. oz./A/yr
	Difenconazole + benzofindiflupyr Aprovia Top	7+3 10.5-13.5 fl oz ¹⁶	14	27 fl oz/A/yr
Scurf (<i>Monilochaetes infuscans</i>)	Dicloran (seed root dip only) Botran 5F	14 0.6 qt/7.5 gal ⁷		1 app
	Dicloran (spray⁸ application only) Botran 5F	14 5.73 oz/14 gal ⁹		1 app
	Thiabendazole (seed root dip only) Mertect 340F	1 107 fl oz/100 gal ^{6,12}		1 app
Seed-borne and soilborne fungi that cause decay, damping off or seedling blight	Azoxystrobin Dynasty 0.83F	11 0.10 to 0.38 fl oz per 100 lb of propagating roots ¹⁷		1 app
	Fludioxonil Maxim 4 FS	12 0.08 to 0.16 fl oz/100 lb of propagating roots ¹⁷		1 app

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Soil Rot or Pox (<i>Streptomyces ipomoeae</i>)	Resistant varieties (Table 1) should be used. Soil pH should be maintained below 5.2 to minimize disease severity if a susceptible variety is used.				
White Rust (<i>Albugo ipomoeae-panduratae</i>)	Azoxystrobin				
	Quadris Flowable	11	6.0-15.5 fl oz	0	120 fl. oz.
	Satori	11	6.0-20.0 fl oz	0	120 fl. oz.
	Willowood Azoxy 2SC	11	6.0-15.5 fl oz	0	123 fl. oz.
	Fenamidone				
	Reason 500 SC	11	5.5-8.2 fl oz	14	16.4 fl oz
	Pyraclostrobin				
	Cabrio EG	11	8-16 fl oz ¹³	0	48 fl oz

¹ Reference to commercial or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended nor endorsement of a particular product by LSU or the LSU AgCenter is implied.

² Mode of action groups are determined by the Fungicide Resistance Action Committee (FRAC).

³ Rates are the amount of formulation (product) per acre unless otherwise indicated. Usually, 100 gallons of water are required to give good coverage with boom sprayers.

⁴ Preharvest interval (PHI) is the minimum number of days allowed between the last application and harvest.

⁵ Maintain free chlorine between 100-150 ppm, pH 6.5-7.5. Replace wash water as often as possible or when it becomes obviously dirty.

⁶ Treat seed roots for 1-2 mins and plant immediately. Replace wash water as often as possible or when it becomes obviously dirty.

⁷ Dip seed roots for 10-15 seconds in a well-agitated suspension. Drain and bed immediately. Prepare a fresh suspension daily.

⁸ Sprayed onto seed roots and soil after seed roots are laid out in the beds.

⁹ Rates are per 1,000 linear feet of row on a 42-inch plant bed. Refer to the label for modes of application.

¹⁰ For postharvest disease control. Dip sweet potatoes for 5 to 10 seconds in a well-agitated suspension. Do not expose treated roots to direct sunlight.

¹¹ To apply as a spray use 16 fl oz/200,000 lb of sweet potatoes. Refer to label for application directions. Do not recirculate suspension where black rot is a problem

¹² Do not use treated roots for food or animal feed.

¹³ Do not make more than one (1) application of Cabrio before alternating to a labeled non-Group 11 fungicide with a different mode of action.

¹⁴ Apply over conveyor belt or rollers by drip or spray to sweet potatoes prior to storage. Uniform coverage is required. Apply the entire suspension to 300,000 pounds of stored sweet potatoes

¹⁵ Ensure Scholar SC remains in suspension by using agitation. Ensure proper coverage of the sweet potatoes. Mix 16 fl oz of Scholar SC in an appropriate water, wax/oil emulsion, of aqueous dilution of a was/oil emulsion.

¹⁶ No more than two applications of Aprovia Top Fungicide may be applied on a 7-day interval. All other applications must be applied no closer than a 14-day interval.

¹⁷ Apply uniformly to roots as a water-based slurry.

The sweet potatoes section was revised October 2022 by Imana Power.