

# Watermelon

## Diseases

### **Powdery Mildew (*Sphaerotheca Fuliginea*):**

This disease is favored by high humidity and tends to occur on older leaves first. Symptoms first appear as white powdery residue primarily on the upper leaf surface. On the lower surface of the leaves circular patches or spots appear. In severe cases, these spread, coalesce and cover both the surfaces of the leaves and spread also to the petioles, stem, etc. Severely attacked leaves become brown and shrivelled and defoliation may occur. Fruits of the affected plants do not develop fully and remain small.

**Control :** Carbendazim (1 ml/litre of water) or Karathane (0.5 ml/litre of water) is sprayed immediately after the appearance of the disease. 2-3 sprays are taken at an interval of 15 days.

### **Anthracnose (*Colletotrichum Sp.*):**

High humidity and moist weather favours the development of the disease.. Symptoms appear on the leaf as black spots, which later turn pink in colour. In case of severe infection the disease spread to the developing fruit.

**Control :** Repeated sprayings at 5-7 days interval with Dithane M 45 (0.2%) or Foltaf (1 g/litre of water) effectively controls the disease.

### **Fusarium Wilt (*Fusarium Oxysporum f. Sp. Niveum*):**

Initially the plants show temporary wilting symptoms, which becomes permanent and progressive, affecting more vines. The leaves of the affected plants show yellowing, loose turgidity and show drooping symptoms. Eventually, the plant dies. In older plants, leaves wilt suddenly and vascular bundles in the collar region become yellow or brown.

**Control:** Three sprays of Karathane (6 g in 10 litres of water) or Bavistin (1 g /litre of water) immediately on appearance of initial symptoms at 5-6 days interval controls the disease. Leaves of fully grown vines should be thoroughly drenched during spraying.

### **Downey Mildew (*Pseudoperonospora Cubensis*):**

It is prevalent in areas of high humidity, especially when summer rains occur regularly. The disease is first seen as yellow angular spots on the upper surface of the leaves. Under conditions of high humidity, whitish powdery growth appears on the lower surface of the leaves. The disease spreads rapidly killing the plant quickly through rapid defoliation.

**Control :** Excellent control of this disease can be achieved with Ridomil (1.5 g/litre of water) which must always be used simultaneously with a protectant fungicide such as Mancozeb (0.2%) to prevent the development of resistant strains.