Scouting for CORN Nematodes

Many Iowa growers are familiar with the soybean cyst nematode and the yield losses it causes in soybeans each year. However, other species of nematodes feed on the roots of corn, causing serious economic reductions in corn production annually.

Some common nematode parasites of corn in Iowa include the dagger, lance, lesion, needle, spiral, sting, and stunt nematodes.

Aboveground symptoms:
stunting • yellowing • midday curling of leaves
swollen roots • small ears with poor grain fill

However, significant corn yield losses can occur without obvious aboveground symptoms.

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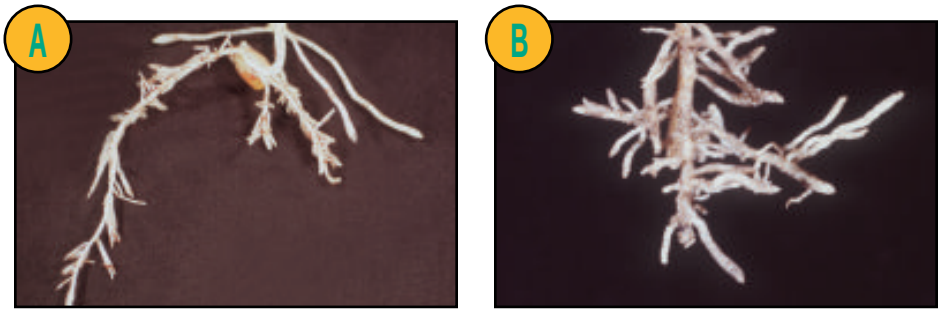
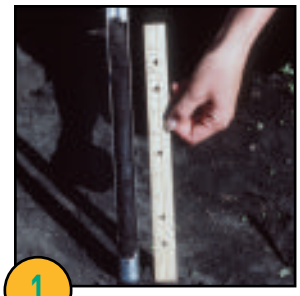
Nematode damage to corn roots often is mistaken for herbicide injury.
Can you distinguish between root damage caused by herbicides and injury caused by nematode feeding?



ANSWER: A, herbicide damage. B, nematode damage.

To accurately diagnose a corn nematode infestation, collect and submit a soil and root sample for analysis. It is also a good idea to submit a *separate* soil and root sample from nearby healthy looking plants.

SAMPLING GUIDELINES



Collect 15 to 20 soil cores, 8—12 inches deep.

Collect soil cores from within the root zone, underneath the seed row.

Collect seminal and nodal roots from affected plants.

Sample mid-season, before plants fully mature.
Avoid sampling from dead or nearly dead plants.

Contact your local county extension office for copies of the Plant Nematode Sample Submission Form PD-32.

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