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Soybean Seed Treatments

It doesn't seem right to be discussing soybean seed treatments before we even get far in to corn planting season, but with increasing interest in earlier soybean planting, an understanding of soybean seed treatments is even more important. This is particularly true when we annual attribute average losses of around two or more bushels per acre from seed rots/seedling blights.

In most years, Pythium, Rhizoctonia, and Fusarium are the primary culprits. While technological advances in seed treatments have allowed us to 'stay ahead' of many diseases, nothing is 100 percent effective, making understanding your seed treatment important.

For example, metalaxyl and mefenoxam seed treatments have activity against Pythium and Phytophthora, but not Fusarium or Rhizoctonia. Even within a disease species, seed treatment efficacy can differ.

Rate can be important, too. Fields with a history of Phytophthora, for example, may require higher rates of seed treatment to be effective.

Weather has huge influences on how well seeds emerge, but they affect seed treatment efficacy as well. Seed treatments typically provide some level of protection against disease for approximately three weeks after planting. If disease pressure occurs after that window, seed treatments will likely not reduce damage as well as they would have earlier in the window.

All these factors underscore the need for an understanding of seed treatments combined with a good scouting program after planting to help better manage soybean seedling diseases. For an overview of our four most common soybean diseases, check out the Crop Protection Network: <https://cropprotectionnetwork.org/resources/publications/seedling-diseases> . With any luck, it will help reduce that two-and-a-half-bushel loss to something much less.

Henbit and Chickweed in Lawns

Both henbit and chickweed are becoming increasingly prevalent as spring weather starts to settle in, but they didn't get here overnight. They actually started growing last fall, spending the winter as small plants we didn't even notice until they started flowering.

Unfortunately, that time we spent *not* paying attention to them is when we might have had *some* luck controlling them. Trying to do so now is a lot more difficult – and often a waste of time and money. We might get a little bit of a 'revenge kill', but plants are typically only burned back and rarely completely killed.

What now? They're winter annuals, so they'll die as soon as weather gets hot. Until then, keep the lawn mowed and let nature take its course. In the meantime, mark the calendar for late October/early November. That's when henbit and chickweed will be mostly germinated, yet relatively small and easy to control, especially when daytime temperatures in the 50's speed control. A bonus: you might catch some dandelions as well.