

False Smut Disease

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False Smut Disease Latest News

According to reports, the paddy crop, which is at the maturing and harvest stage, has been infested with false smut disease, causing widespread damage across Punjab.

About False Smut Disease

- False smut (**haldi rog**) is an important **fungal disease of rice (paddy)**.
- It is caused by the **fungus Ustilaginoidea virens**.
- It is also known as **Lakshmi disease** or **Oothupathi disease** of rice.
- The disease is **hard to stop**, because **fungus infects the crop during the flowering stage**, and **symptoms** of the disease are **evident after emergence of rice panicles**.
- The **typical symptom** of the disease is **black fungal mycelium growth in paddy grains**, which **become covered with yellow fungal growth** in the field.
- **Mature spores are orange** and **turn yellowish green or greenish black in colour**.
- **Only a few grains in a panicle** are **usually infected**, and the rest are normal.

- It **doesn't directly impact other plant parts.**
- It **causes chalkiness of grains**, which **leads to reduction in grain weight**. It also **reduces seed germination.**
- The percentage of infected panicles and the extent of infection within each panicle significantly **impact yield loss.**
- **Favorable Factors for False Smut in Paddy Crops?**
 - **Warm and humid weather:** Temperatures between **25-30°C** and **high humidity (>80%)** promote fungal growth.
 - **Presence of infected plant debris:** **Spores** can **survive on leftover stubble** and straw from previous harvests.
 - **High nitrogen content in soil:** Excessive nitrogen application can increase susceptibility.
- **Control** of false smut of rice **through fungicide application is feasible**; however, high usage of fungicides has **led to the resistance development** in causal agents besides environmental pollution.

Source: HT

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