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Fusarium on Echeveria

What do you write an e-Gro Alert on when your state is under a stay-at-home order due to COVID-19, and you have been stuck under quarantine because a co-worker tested positive? You write about your houseplants!

While in my living room, now office, I happened to glance over at an echeveria on my bookshelf and noticed there was something definitely pathological going on. There was a lot of obvious white fungal growth at the center of the plant, with leaves rotting at the base. Vascular discoloration could be seen at the bases of the rotted leaves. Luckily, our local diagnostician lives in my neighborhood and I was able to have the sample delivered to her doorstep. After inspection and culturing we learned that the culprit was *Fusarium*.



Fungal growth and rotted leaves on Echeveria, a result of infection by *Fusarium*

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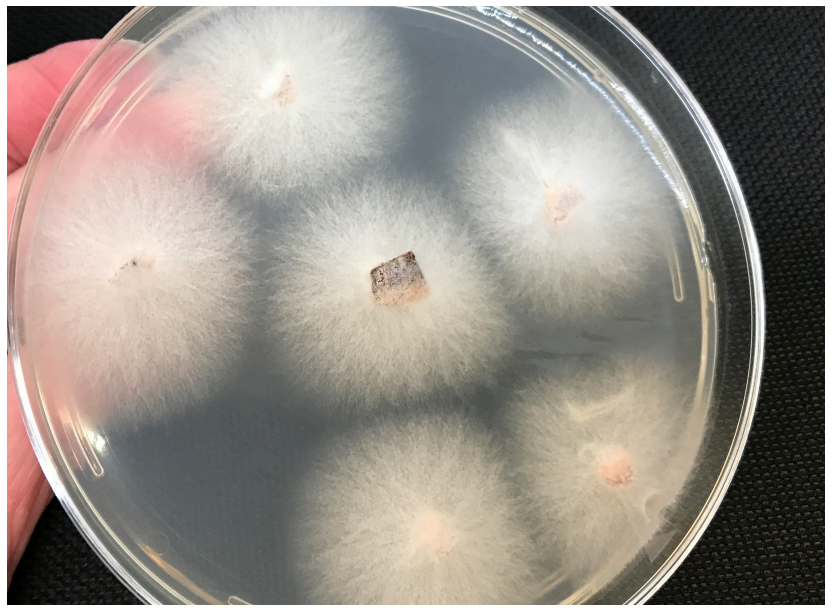
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Fungi in the genus *Fusarium* are responsible for a wide range of maladies, with a range of symptoms, on a wide range of plants. Various species of *Fusarium* can cause different types of diseases including stem and crown rots, vascular wilts, root rots, and leaf spots. This pathogen can be very host specific in some cases or can have a broad host range in others. It is often difficult to correctly discern between the causes root and stem/crown rots, so be sure to enlist the help of a diagnostic lab.



Fusarium in culture. Photo: Margery Daughtrey

What to do about Fusarium? Prevention and sanitation are always key in managing any disease in a greenhouse – Fusarium is no exception. Fusarium can be spread by propagation tools, reusing growing media, reusing un-sanitized trays or containers, and splashing water. Don't be complacent with your sanitation protocols, and if Fusarium is found infecting your crops be sure to step up your efforts. Infected plants should be disposed of and protect remaining healthy plants by using a labeled fungicide. When dealing with a recent outbreak or particularly susceptible plants, preventative treatments would be helpful. I've heard reports of injury from fungicides, particularly in situations in which droplets pooled on the leaf surfaces, so use cautiously. It is always a good idea to test a treatment on a small number of plants prior to treating your whole crop.



Another view of Fusarium on Echeveria. Photo: Margery Daughtrey

One of my four-legged co-workers



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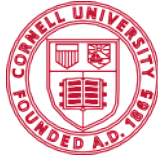
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