Anthracnose
*Colletotrichum graminicola*

The fungus causes *anthracnose leaf blight* and *anthracnose stalk rot*. The symptoms of leaf blight vary greatly. The first symptoms are small oval to elongate water-soaked spots on the leaves which may become tan at the center.

The lesions are usually surrounded by a **border** that can be yellow, to red, to brown in color. The disease develops best on older tissue, usually the lower leaves. Small black dots (fruiting bodies or **acervuli**) may develop on the dead tissue.
Anthracnose stalk rot may occur at any stage of growth. The internal stalk tissues are often blackened or discolored, and the stalk can be easily crushed with your hands.

**Disease development**
- Fungus overwinters on corn residues
- Spores from debris are carried by wind or splashing rain to leaves
- Anthracnose is favored by high temperatures and extended periods of cloudy, wet weather.
- Minimal stalk damage by European corn borers predisposes corn to stalk rot

**Management**
- Practice crop rotation - consecutive plantings of corn (sweet or field) at risk
- Incorporate corn residues
- Select tolerant varieties
- Control European corn borers on corn
- Fungicides are not necessary