

## Anthracnose (ripe rot)

*Colletotrichum acutatum* (fungus)

Anthracnose is a serious pre- and post-harvest fruit rot in most blueberry-growing regions. Cane, twig, and leaf lesions are more sporadic.



**Symptoms.** The fruit rot manifests itself as sunken areas on ripe fruit with gelatinous, orange spore masses. On young canes, lesions are dark brown with fruiting bodies in concentric circles. On twigs, dark brown lesions may originate from infected buds and kill part of the twig. On the leaves, lesions look reddish brown with distinct borders. Salmon-pink spore masses may appear on infected tissues under humid conditions.



### Disease cycle.

The fungus overwinters in infected twigs, old fruiting spurs and live buds. In spring and summer, spores produced on infected tissues are dispersed by rain and cause new infections. In Michigan, most spores tend to be released between bloom and early fruit development. Prolonged wetness (12 hours or more) and temperatures of 68-77°F (20-25°C) promote disease development. Fruit infections remain latent until the fruit starts to ripen or until after harvest.



Cane lesions (left) with fruiting bodies in concentric circles. Orange spore masses (right) on a dead twig and bud in spring.

**Management.** Prune out old or infected wood; create an open canopy to reduce humidity and increase spray penetration; plant resistant cultivars; limit overhead irrigation; harvest in a timely manner; cool fruit rapidly after harvest; apply effective fungicides from pink bud to harvest.

### Additional resources:

[Michigan Blueberry Facts: Anthracnose Fruit Rot \(Ripe Rot\)](#)