

Dodder

Cuscuta spp. (flowering plants)



Dodder is a parasitic flowering plant that attacks many crops, including blueberry.

Symptoms. Blueberry bushes are covered with the yellow to orange vinelike

Dodder flowers curled around blueberry stem.



strands that are the leafless stems of the dodder plant. Heavily infected blueberry bushes are stunted with reddish leaves and reduced yields.

Disease cycle.

Dodder reproduces by small, brown seeds that can

remain viable in soil for 30 years. Upon germination early in the spring, the seedling coils itself around the host plant, penetrates the epidermis, and obtains nutrients via embedded haustoria (feeding structures). A single dodder plant can spread 4.5 to 7.5 meters per year.

Management. Physically remove and burn dodder before it sets seed; scout fields next to irrigation ponds for infestation (seeds can spread via irrigation water); practice good weed control to remove other hosts; use preemergence herbicides; wipe with glyphosate.