

BENOMYL FOR THE CONTROL OF ASCOCHYTA DECAY OF CHRYSANTHEMUM CUTTINGS

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Ascochyta blight has been reported to kill more than 50% of the chrysanthemum cuttings in propagating benches under mist. Caused by the fungus, *Mycosphaarella ligulicola*, Baker, Dimock, & Davis, the disease may be present in the stock plants from which cuttings are taken. Even though the incidence of disease in the stock plants can be reduced by foliar sprays of benomyl or chloroneb, the loss of cuttings may remain unacceptable.

Benomyl has been mixed with rooting hormones to control fungal decays of rhododendron cuttings and as a cutting soak or as a drench on the rooting medium to control a fungal decay of azalea cuttings.

This is a report of the successful use of benomyl as a cutting soak for the control of Ascochyta blight of chrysanthemums.

Materials and Methods

Cuttings of *Chrysanthemum morifolium*, taken from stock plants sprayed with either benomyl (Benlate) or chloroneb were immersed for approxi-

mately 5 or 60 seconds in 30 gallons of a suspension of benomyl (1 lb. Benlate 50 WP in 100 gallons water) contained in a 50-gallon drum. After they were dipped, the cuttings were drained in a wire-mesh basket for 4 to 5 minutes. The drained cuttings were then placed in polyethylene bags, and stored at about 5°C. Five to 30 days later they were set out in rooting benches containing equal mixtures of peat and perlite. While they were rooting, the cuttings were misted in proportion to solar radiation as controlled with a Solatrol.

Results

Seven to 10 days after the cuttings were planted, the incidence of disease was estimated in the propagating benches. *Ascochyta* blight destroyed 3 to 5% of the cuttings that had not been dipped in benomyl. There was virtually no loss from blight in those that had been dipped in benomyl. The 5-second dip was as effective as the 60-second dip. It was also noted that the slow-rooting varieties rooted more rapidly after they had been dipped in benomyl.

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