



**Scientific Name**

*Sclerotinia sclerotiorum*

**High Tunnel Host Crops**

Tomato, pepper, cucurbits, crucifers, more 170+

**Identification**

Initial infection is often near the base of the stem at the soil line. Bleached areas and watery soft rots form on the stems and leaf axils and then white cottony mycelium forms and spreads to the stems, leaves, petioles, and flowers. The plant wilts and infected tissues become further bleached and brittle. In 7 to 10 days, clumps of mycelium form black sclerotia that are white-pinkish inside.

**Often Confused With**

Botrytis gray mold



**Thresholds**

Currently, there is no threshold information available for white mold in high tunnel tomatoes. However, disease-forecasting systems have been developed for field crops such as canola.

**Favorable Environmental Conditions**

The pathogen favors relatively cool temperatures from 59 to 70°F. Sixteen to 72 hours of continuous wetness and relative humidity (> 90%) is favorable for spore infection.

**Scouting Notes**

Scouting is most important when the tomato plants are flowering because this is when they are most

susceptible to infection. White cottony mycelial growth will form on flowers, stems, and leaves. The infected plants should be removed and destroyed to prevent further infections.



**Management Notes**

*Prevent Excess Moisture* – If soils remain warm without continuous wet periods, the pathogen will not germinate. Keeping plant density low and pruning to increase air movement will aid in preventing excess moisture on the foliage.

*Chemical Treatments* – Preventative fungicide applications will help prevent infections.

*Start with Clean Soil* – Sclerotia overwinter in warm and dry soil. By sanitizing or sterilizing soil by soil fumigation and other methods, the sclerotia will be destroyed.

*Sanitation* – Clean tools and machinery and remove infected plant material to prevent spread of spores and sclerotia. Carefully dig up diseased plants and remove soil in a 4-6 inch radius around the base of the stem to remove any sclerotia that may have fallen from the plant to the soil.

