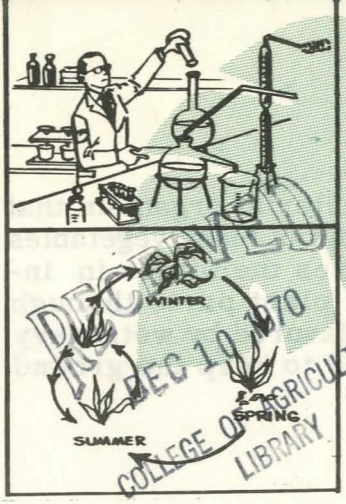
1959

# EC59-1828 Plant Diseases : Iris Soft Rot

John L. Weihing






E.C. 59-1828

# PLANT DISEASES

*JOHN L. WEIHING*
*Extension Plant Pathologist*

# Iris Soft Rot

## SYMPTOMS

The leaves begin to turn brown and die back from the tips. There is no spotting of the leaves as in the case of leaf spot disease. The die-back progresses until the entire plant is dead. An examination of the rhizomes (the big fleshy roots) reveals them to be soft, rotten and foul in odor.

Extension Service
University of Nebraska College of Agriculture
and U. S. Department of Agriculture
Cooperating
W. V. Lambert, Director E. W. Janike, Assoc. Director

## CAUSE

Iris soft rot is caused by a bacterial organism that can cause a soft rot of fleshy organs of many vegetables and flowers. The bacterium passes the winter in infected parts. It enters healthy plant parts through wounds. The disease is greatly favored by wet, heavy soils or shady locations that tend to keep the ground continuously moist.

## CONTROL

Plant iris in a well-drained soil and avoid crowded conditions in the iris bed. In the fall destroy all dead leaves and rubbish in the iris bed. When the disease starts, it may be checked by applying 1 pint of 1-1000 Mercuric chloride (one 7 1/2 grain tablet in 1 pint of water) to each square foot of bed. Repeat this in about 10 days. Caution: Mercuric Chloride Is Poisonous And Caustic. Mix in glassware or earthenware.

In seasons when soft rot is severe, take up the rhizomes in August. Cut out and destroy all rotted portions of the rhizomes. Soak the rot-free rhizomes in 1-1000 Mercuric chloride solution for 10 minutes. Plant in a new location or sterilize the soil. Avoid excessive watering during the growing season.

This disease is easily spread to new iris plantings during lifting and dividing operations by spades, etc. You should soak the rhizomes in Mercuric chloride as described above before replanting.