

New Cotton Die-Back Reported In East Georgia
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Dry weather and hot temperatures were plenty to keep farmers on edge this crop year. Recently another hurdle has surfaced. Growers, Extension agents and specialists are trying to figure out just what is going on.

There have been a number of outbreaks of leaf spot disease in cotton this year across the state. Recently we have there has been an appearance of dramatic and unusual set of symptoms in fields in eastern Georgia (particularly Bulloch County) that has caused additional concern. Symptoms of this die-back include death in the terminal, a “shepherd’s crook” appearance of upper foliage, damage to upper limbs and unusual leaf spots. In my opinion, the symptoms exhibited on the terminal growth somewhat resembles fire blight on ornamental and fruit trees.

Jared Whitaker, UGA Cotton Agronomist says that the UGA Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab in Tifton has isolated several “fungi of interest” from the symptomatic plants to include *Choanephora*, *Fusarium*, and *Phomopsis*. At this point it is not clear how these pathogens are related to these symptoms. At present more work needs to be done to try and figure out what’s going on.

These symptoms are pretty striking when you see them. Hopefully these reports will be the first and last that we have. If you would like more information on this “new” cotton problem or for related information, contact us at the Burke County Extension Office at (706)554-2119.