

Botrytis

Biology

Grey mould, blossom rot, Botrytis rot

The causative organism of leaf and stem mould and marked blossom rot on Phalaenopsis and Cattleya is the weed mould *Botrytis cinerea* Pers. This common intruder has a very broad spectrum of host plants; in fact it grows nearly on all parts of the plant. A characteristic feature is the grey sporal area on the infested spots (grey mould) which can be seen in high humidity. When slightly touched or due to air movement, the spores detach from their carriers and spread in the greenhouse. In favourable conditions *Botrytis* can also form dark sclerotical diseases.

Damage

At first the blossoms show small watery spots that can be seen with a back light. Later they become brown spots and the tissue becomes necrotic. Symptoms mainly occur in constantly high humidity and water sprinkling, resulting from conditions below dew point. Dirty greyish spots may occur on the leaves and on these spots, the dusty sporogenesis will appear.

Control

- *Botrytis* is a secondary parasite; well nourished and optimally cultivated plants will hardly be infested.
- Insufficient light, unbalanced nitrogen fertilisation or too high a salt content in the substrate increase the susceptibility of the plants.
- During blossom formation it has to be ensured that the conditions are not below dew point to avoid the resulting water sprinkling from damaging the plant. Air humidity must be decreased especially in winter, stagnating air has to be avoided. In some cases the use of fans may be recommended.
- In non blossoming stands repeated prophylactic treatment may be done with fungicides. As *Botrytis* becomes resistant to fungicides very quickly, the agent groups have to be changed constantly.
- Direct chemical control of *Botrytis* blossom rot does not make any sense.

Orchids diseases

Botrytis



Cattleya: Botrytis cinerea on a blossom



Phalaenopsis: Botrytis cinerea on a blossom