

# Corn Diagnostics Quick Guide: Goss's Wilt vs. Northern Corn Leaf Blight

Damon L. Smith, Field Crops Extension Pathologist, University of Wisconsin-Madison

## Goss's Wilt



### Symptoms and Signs

1. Bacteria: *Clavibacter michiganensis* subsp. *Nebraskensis*
2. Gray or yellow stripes on leaves
3. "Freckles" = brown or green irregular spots when held up to light
4. Symptoms can appear at the top of the plant first
5. Vascular tissue discolored – Orange hue
6. Bacterial ooze, dried ooze, and/or bacterial streaming evident

### Favorable Conditions

1. Overwinters in corn residue
2. Reduced tillage = increased risk
3. Continuous corn rotation
4. Susceptible hybrids
5. Hail, wind, or severe weather events that cause injury

### Management

1. Use hybrids appropriate for your region with the highest rating for Goss's Wilt
2. Manage old corn residue
3. Rotate, rotate, rotate
4. DO NOT use a fungicide
5. Foliar products marketed for Goss's wilt control, have not proven effective in University research trials

## Northern Corn Leaf Blight



### Symptoms and Signs

1. Fungus: *Exserohilum turcicum*
2. Cigar-shaped leaf lesions parallel to leaf veins – pale gray to tan
3. Dark gray spores within lesions – when conditions are moist
4. Symptoms appear on lower leaves first
5. Infection while leaves are in the whorl = banding leaf lesion patterns
6. Lesions can form on outer husks of ears

### Favorable Conditions

1. Overwinters in corn residue
2. Reduced tillage = increased risk
3. Extended rainy periods = increased risk
4. Favored by moderate temperatures (64 – 81F)

### Management

1. Use resistant hybrids – single and multi-gene resistance available
2. Resistance does not = immunity; lesions can still form
3. Manage old corn residue
4. Rotate, rotate, rotate
5. Fungicide application – for best economic return, apply at VT-R1 growth stage to protect ear leaves from infection

