



## Small Grains XII

### Small Grains

### **Ergot (wheat)**

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**Cause:** *Claviceps purpurea*.

**Occurrence:** During flowering and grain filling.

#### **Key Symptoms:**

- The most conspicuous evidence of ergot is the presence of slender black fungal sclerotia that replace individual seeds and protrude from the head.
- Black sclerotia may be mixed in with seed after harvesting.
- Ergot might be confused with some of the bunt diseases, but ergot sclerotia are larger and much harder than bunt balls and are not filled with powdery spores.
- Yellow droplets or honeydew may be present on the head during flowering
- Some infections may result in partial sterility of the head

**Pathogen:** Fungal sclerotia survive in the soil or are sewn with seed during planting. Infection of florets is favored by wet, cool weather during flowering.

#### **Management Approaches**

Ergot is not common in wheat but may be a problem in triticale and rye. Crop rotation and the use of seed free of sclerotia usually reduces ergot outbreaks.

Categories: Small grains, Diseases, Ergot

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