Southern Stem Rot
[caused by *Sclerotium rolfsii*]

Southern stem rot is found throughout North Carolina. Symptoms include wilting of individual stems, stem lesions, shredded stems and pegs, rotted pods, and plant death. Stem lesions and pods are similar in color to a brown paper bag. White, stringy fungus growth, often having a fan-like appearance, may be present along with tan to brown sclerotia that look like mustard seed. These fungal structures may be seen on the lower stems and on nearby leaf litter. They distinguish southern stem rot from other diseases caused by soilborne pathogens, but damage can occur even when these signs are absent. Fields with heavy vine growth and high moisture are most prone to stem rot. This disease is most active during the hottest part of the season, especially following rain. In drier seasons, the fungus is most active underground, and you won’t see the damage until digging. Southern stem rot often is found together with CBR.

*Sclerotium rolfsii* has an extremely broad host range, but it does not attack small grains, corn, and other grass species. Avoid rotations with soybeans, tobacco and vegetables.
Some fungicides used to control leaf spots, such as azoxystrobin (Abound), tebuconazole (Folicur), tebuconazole plus prothioconazole (Provost), propiconazole plus flutolanil (Artisan), pyraclostrobin (Headline), and fluoxastrobin (Evito) also control stem rot. Higher rates than those used for leaf spot control may be necessary. Flutolanil (Convoy) controls stem rot but not foliar diseases, so continue your leaf spot control program with an appropriate fungicide. Most soil fungicides work best when applied just prior to disease onset. Treat fields with a history of problems according to the leaf spot advisory or calendar schedule between July 15 and the end of August.