

Resistance to *Sclerotinia* stem rot in *Brassica*

Andrew Taylor and John Clarkson, Warwick Crop Centre
School of Life Sciences, University of Warwick, Wellesbourne, Warwick, CV35 9EF, UK

Background

- *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* causes disease in many crops including Brassicas.
- Leaves and stems are affected reducing yields in crops such as oilseed rape.
- The fungus infects plants through airborne ascospores released by mushroom like apothecia produced by sclerotia (resting bodies) residing in the soil.

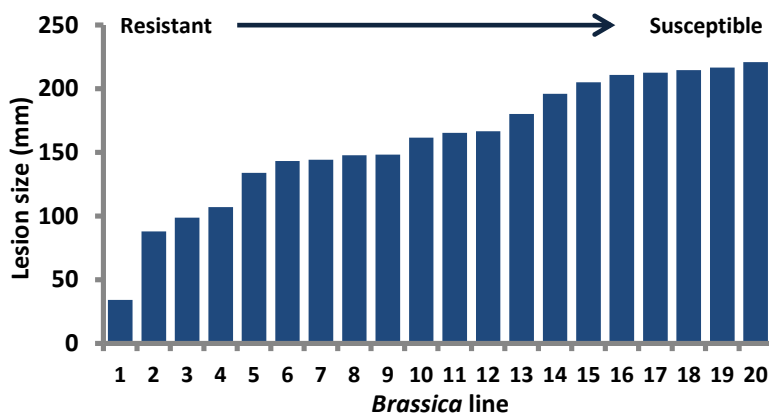


Stem rot symptoms on oilseed rape

Apothecia of *S. sclerotiorum*

Identifying resistance

- A range of resistance was identified within 96 lines from a *Brassica napus* diversity set using a test on young plants.
- Twenty lines were then tested for resistance at the mature (flowering) plant stage by inoculating stems with an agar plug of *S. sclerotiorum*.
- Resistant lines resulted in smaller stem lesion sizes.
- Further work aims to exploit these lines further and look for other and potentially stronger sources of resistance in wild *Brassica* species.



Stem lesion size for 20 *B. napus* lines



Resistant (left) and susceptible (right) lines of *B. napus*