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Progress on Pythium

Jennifer Polanz

While at the Global Produce & Floral Show in Atlanta, I visited the Sakata Seed America booth, where I talked with CEA Lead Tracy Lee Zogby about the company's progress on combatting Pythium in spinach for hydroponic production. What they've found after working with growers in real-life environments is that the problem is not always Pythium ... or at least it's not Pythium first.

What they found is that other root pathogens, like Fusarium, can create an ideal environment for Pythium to come in and do its dirty work, which takes down spinach crops faster than you can say ... well ... Fusarium. Once they determined that, they began to look for and test Fusarium-resistant varieties in hydroponic production to see if they can last longer. So far that resistance seems to help the plants hold off long enough to stay healthy through the growing and harvesting process.

Specifically, Sakata is targeting its Darkside baby leaf spinach variety with good Fusarium resistance.