Pulse Variety Disease Guide 2026

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2025 season summary

Disease pressure on pulse crops during 2025 was low. Limited inoculum carryover from 2024 and relatively dry seasonal conditions in 2025 restricted disease development in pulse crops.

However, Ascochyta blight (AB) was detected in lentils during winter and spring, while limited incidence of Botrytis grey mould (BGM) and Sclerotinia white mould (SWM) were observed later in spring following a brief period of wetter conditions. Several of these disease occurrences were possibly associated with limited genetic diversity for resistance to diseases among pulse varieties sown in SA.

Due to the predominantly dry conditions and low disease pressure, no yield losses were reported. These observations highlight the importance of recognising seasons that are not conducive to disease development and tailoring management strategies accordingly.

Pulse disease management in 2026

Disease risk in 2026 is expected to be moderate to high. This is largely due to the widespread cultivation of susceptible varieties and late spring rainfall in 2025, which resulted in a high carryover of inoculum in infected stubble. In addition, above-average autumn rainfall prior to the 2026 sowing season has supported the establishment of a “green bridge” through volunteer plants, enabling pathogens to persist and build up inoculum between seasons. Therefore, pulse disease management in 2026 will require a proactive and integrated approach.

Key management strategies include:

- **Variety selection:** Prefer varieties with improved disease resistance ratings.
- **Crop rotation and stubble management:** Avoid continuous cropping of the same pulse species where feasible and manage infected residues.
- **Seed management:** Use clean seed or apply appropriate seed treatments where required.
- **In-crop monitoring:** Regularly inspect crops for early disease symptoms.
- **Targeted fungicide use:** Apply fungicides based on disease risk, crop stage and seasonal conditions rather than as a routine practice.

Ascochyta blight and Botrytis grey mould in lentils

Ascochyta blight (AB) and Botrytis grey mould (BGM) will require proactive management in 2026. Ascochyta blight was more prevalent during 2025, with 54% of crops (n = 24) infected. The disease was detected throughout the season across multiple growth stages up to podding, although mean severity remained below 10%. While no yield losses were reported, seed infection and grain quality degradation was evident in affected paddocks.

SARDI seed testing services indicated that 50% of submitted samples (n = 10) were infected with AB, with infection levels ranging from 4.75% to 82%. Seed infection levels above 2% are generally considered sufficient to enable disease carryover into the following season and, under conducive conditions, can significantly impact yield and quality.

Careful assessment of seed sources is therefore essential. Where seed infection is suspected or known, the use of appropriate seed treatments may help limit early disease establishment and reduce in-season disease development.

BGM was less prevalent during 2025 with conditions being dry for most of the season. Late spring rainfall did provide conditions for its development; however, it did not cause any yield or quality losses.

Chocolate spot in faba bean

Faba bean was generally less affected by disease during 2025, with approximately 72% of surveyed crops (n = 18) remaining free from disease. Chocolate spot was detected at low incidence and severity in the South-East late in the season and so did not require fungicide intervention.

However, proactive management of chocolate spot may be necessary in 2026, particularly in crops sown into infected stubble under conducive conditions. Effective management relies on an integrated approach, including the use of resistant varieties, crop rotation with non-host crops, appropriate crop densities, and a well-timed fungicide strategy where required.

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Root diseases

Pulse root diseases is a developing area of research in Australia. Key pulse root diseases affecting SA growers in low-medium rainfall regions include Fusarium and Rhizoctonia root rots and root lesion nematodes (*Pratylenchus*). In high rainfall regions, Aphanomyces and Phytophthora root rots are important in crops like faba beans and lupin. New research currently being conducted aims to identify varietal differences and potential sources of resistance and tolerance in a range of crop types. Variation in cultivar susceptibility to Aphanomyces root rot has already been observed in faba bean experiments in the South-East, and some variation is noted in lupin cultivars to Phytophthora root rot.

Virus update

Alfalfa mosaic virus was detected at low levels in SA in faba bean in recent years.

Many economically important viruses are transmitted by aphids, and the “green bridge” established through early autumn of 2026 may be a reservoir for aphids and viruses leading into the 2026 season. Early infection with viruses can cause severe losses. Whilst these diseases are mostly of low concern, the release of very susceptible varieties could lead to increased problems in future.

Field pea blackspot risk forecast for SA

Field pea blackspot risk forecast provides location and season specific weekly disease risk forecast. To receive alerts, text 'blackspot', your name and nearest weather station to 0475 959 932, or email BlackspotManager@dpird.wa.gov.au.

The latest Blackspot Manager forecast for SA is available through this link Blackspot Forecast Manager.

SARDI Crop Watch

For seasonal disease reports, subscribe to the SARDI SA CropWatch e-newsletter pir.sa.gov.au/cropwatch.

Disease identification

A diagnostic service is available to farmers and industry for diseased plant specimens. Samples of all leaf and aerial plant parts should be kept free of moisture and wrapped in paper, not a plastic bag. Roots should be dug up carefully, preserving as much of the root system as possible and preferably kept damp.

SARDI Seed testing service

A seed testing service for detecting fungal disease infections is available at SARDI for pulse, oilseed and cereal crops. Refer Seed and crop testing - PIRSA for more information.

Send your samples to:

SARDI Plant health and Diagnostics
Locked bag 100, Glen Osmond, SA 5064.

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Acknowledgements

This fact sheet has been produced through co-investment from the South Australian Grain Industry Trust (SAGIT) and the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) under the Grains Pathology Traineeship (SAR 03324) awarded to Mr Kul Adhikari. The data presented is generated through co-investment from the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), the University of Adelaide, Flinders University, and SARDI, as part of the UA Seasonal Status of Pests and Diseases delivered to growers (UOA2403-016RTX) and the NVT Disease Screening Services for the generation of disease ratings (DAS2401-002SAX). We thank Dr Rohan Kimber for assistance with disease surveys and sample collection, and Michelle Russ and Marzena Krysinska-Kaczmarek for pathogen isolation work. The support of regional agronomists and growers is also gratefully acknowledged.

Pulse Variety Disease Categories

Sourced from NVT Online unless indicated otherwise **https://www.nvtonline.com.au/crop-disease/**

This publication was developed after the 2026 SA Sowing Guide, and disease categories updated based on disease screening in 2025.
[p] = provisional. Rating may change in the future NVT disease review once further data becomes available.
- = not tested.
[#] = Not tested in 2025 NVT Disease Ratings Program. Ratings are provided from the last time testing was conducted and maybe a breeder rating.

Rating	Category	Definition
	Resistant	No symptoms visible. No fungicides are required.
RMR	Resistant to Moderately Resistant	The disease may be visible but will not cause significant plant damage or loss. However, under extreme disease pressure or highly favourable environments conditions fungicide applications may be required e.g. to prevent seed staining.
MR	Moderately Resistant	The disease may be visible but will not cause significant plant damage or loss. However, under high disease pressure or highly favourable environments conditions fungicide applications may be required e.g. to prevent seed staining.
MRMS	Moderately Resistant to Moderately Susceptible	The disease symptoms are moderate and may cause some yield and/or seed quality losses in conducive conditions. Fungicide applications, if applicable, may be required to prevent yield loss and seed staining.
MS	Moderately Susceptible	Disease symptoms are moderate to severe and will cause significant yield and seed quality loss in the absence of fungicides in conducive seasons, but not complete crop loss.
S	Susceptible	The disease is severe and will cause significant yield and seed quality loss, including complete crop loss in the absence of fungicides, in conducive conditions.
VS	Very Susceptible	Growing this variety in areas where a disease is likely to be present is very high risk. Significant yield and seed quality losses, including complete crop loss can be expected without control and the increase in inoculum may create problems for other growers.

LENTIL VARIETY DISEASE RATINGS				
Variety	**Ascochyta blight***	**Botrytis Grey Mould**	***Pratylenchus neglectus* resistance**	***Pratylenchus thornei* resistance**
SMALL RED				
ALB Terrier	MR	MRMS	MRMS	MRMS
GIA Lightning	MRMS (p)	MS	MRMS	MRMS (p)
GIA Sire	MRMS (p)	MS	MRMS	MRMS (p)
GIA Thunder	MRMS (p)	MRMS	MRMS	MR (p)
PBA Highland XT	MR	MS	MRMS[#]	MRMS[#]
PBA Hurricane XT	MRMS	MS	MRMS[#]	MRMS[#]
MEDIUM RED				
ALB Burdett	MRMS	MS (p)	MSp	MSp
GIA Leader	MR (p)	MRMS	MRMS	MR (p)[#]
PBA Bolt	MRMS	S	MR[#]	MR[#]
PBA Hallmark XT	MRMS	MRMS	MR[#]	MRMS[#]
LARGE RED				
ALB Dane	MR	MRMS	MRMS	MRMS
GIA Colombo	RMR (p)	MRMS (p)	MR (p)	MRMS (p)
GIA Metro	MR (p)	MRMS	MRMS	MRMS (p)
PBA Jumbo2	RMR	MR	MR[#]	MRMS[#]
PBA KelpieXT	MRMS	MS	MRMS	MRMS

* Pathotype 2 (PBA Hurricane XT Virulent) of ascochyta blight on lentils is predominant pathotype in SA.

CHICKPEA VARIETY DISEASE RATINGS

Variety	Ascochyta blight	*Pratylenchus neglectus* resistance	*Pratylenchus thornei* resistance
DESI TYPES			
CBA Captain	S	MR (p)	MS
CBA Spin	S	MRMS (p)	MRMS
PBA Drummond	VS	MR#	MRMS#
PBA Maiden	S	MRMS#	MRMS#
PBA Seamer	S	MRMS	MRMS#
PBA Slasher	S	MRMS#	MRMS#
PBA Striker	S	MRMS#	MRMS#
Red Khan	VS (p)	MS (p)	MS (p)
KABULI TYPES			
Genesis™ 090	MS	MRMS	MS
Genesis™ Kalkee	S	MRMS	MS
PBA Magnus	S	MRMS	MSS
PBA Monarch	S	MRMS#	MS#
PBA Royal	MS	MR (p)	MS#

FABA BEAN VARIETY DISEASE RATINGS

Variety	Ascochyta blight*	Cercospora leaf spot#	Chocolate spot	Rust#	*Pratylenchus thornei resistance*
Farah	MS	S	S	VS	MRMS#
FBA Ayla	MS (P)#	S	S	MR	MRMS
Fiesta VF	S	S	S	VS	MS#
Nura	MR(p)	S	MS	VS	MS#
PBA Amberley	MR	S	MRMS	VS	MRMS
PBA Bendoc	MRMS (p)	S	S	VS	MRMS
PBA Marne	MS	S	MS	MRMS	MS#
PBA Nanu	MS (P)#	S	S	MR	MRMS#
PBA Nasma	S (P)#	S	S	MRMS	MSS#
PBA Rana	MS (p)	S	MS	VS	MS#
PBA Samira	MRMS (p)	S	MS	S	MRMS#
PBA Warda	S#	S	S	MRMS	MRMS#
PBA Zahra	MRMS	S	MS	S	MRMS#

* Pathotype 2 of ascochyta blight on faba beans is the predominant and widespread strain across SA.

FIELD PEA VARIETY DISEASE RATINGS

Variety	Ascochyta blight (Blackspot)#	Bacterial Blight#	Downy Mildew (Kaspa strain)*	Powdery Mildew	*Pratylenchus neglectus* resistance	*Pratylenchus thornei* resistance
APB Bondi	MS	S	RMR	RMR	RMR	MSS
APB Whitehaven	-	-	S	R	MR (p)	MR (p)
GIA Kastar	MS (p)	S	S (p)	RMR (p)	MR	MS
GIA Ourstar	MS (p)	S (p)	S (p)	S (p)	MRMS	MS
Kaspa	MS	S	S	S	RMR#	MRMS#
PBA Butler	MS	MS	S#	S#	RMR#	MRMS#
PBA Gunyah	MS	S	S#	S#	RMR#	MRMS#
PBA Noosa	MS	S	MS	S	RMR	MRMS
PBA Oura	MS	MS	S	S	MR#	MRMS (p)#
PBA Pearl	MS	MS	S	S	MR#	MRMS#
PBA Percy	MS	MRMS	S	S	RMR	RMR
PBA Taylor	MS	S	S	S	RMR	MRMS
PBA Twilight	MS	S	S#	S#	MR#	MRMS#
PBA Wharton	MS	S	S#	R (S)#	MR#	MRMS#

*The Kaspa virulent strain of downy mildew in field pea is widespread across South Australia