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How to Scout and Troubleshoot Problems in Crops

- **Get prepared**
 - Gather tools that will help you acquire a sample
 - Cutters, small shovel, hand lens, plastic bags, marker, etc.
 - Go to the field with an open mind and investigate all possibilities!
 - Look at the big picture first, then the details
- **Know the crop you are working with**
 - What does the crop normally look like
 - Is it appropriate for this stage in the planting
 - How does your crop compare
- **Recall important dates/events**
 - Planting date
 - Any chemical applications
 - Weather conditions
 - Throughout the planting
 - During critical events
 - When problem appeared
 - Gradual or sudden
 - Soil history
 - Previous crop
- **Assess the site for symptoms**
 - Single plant/entire planting
 - Only certain varieties
 - Wet/dry area
 - Sun/shade
 - Scattered
 - Pattern
 - Specific row(s)/edge of field/circular spots

- **Determine where problem is found on the plant(s)**
 - Old growth/new growth
 - Bottom/top of plant
 - Whole plant/one side
 - Scattered
- **Identify parts of the plant that are affected**
 - Use a hand lens to closely inspect for insects or spores (underside of leaves)
 - Leaves
 - Branches/twigs
 - Stem/stalk/trunk
 - Flowers/fruits/seeds
 - Seedlings
 - Roots
 - Whole plant
- **Observe Symptoms**
 - Wilting
 - Yellowing/browning
 - Distortion/curling
 - Leaf spots
 - Stunting
- **Take a Sample**
 - Include moderate symptoms or margin between healthy and affected
 - Fill out submission form
 - Submit to County Cooperative Extension Office

Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by University of Delaware Cooperative Extension.