

# From genome to crop; sustainable strategies for managing *Brassica napus* (oilseed rape) resistance to *Leptosphaeria maculans* (phoma stem canker)

**B. D. L. Fitt<sup>1</sup>, N. Evans<sup>1</sup>, B.J. Howlett<sup>2</sup> and T. Rouxel<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Rothamsted Research, Harpenden, Herts., AL5 2JQ, UK

<sup>2</sup> The University of Melbourne, VIC 3010, Australia

<sup>3</sup> INRA-PMDV, 78026 Versailles Cedex, France

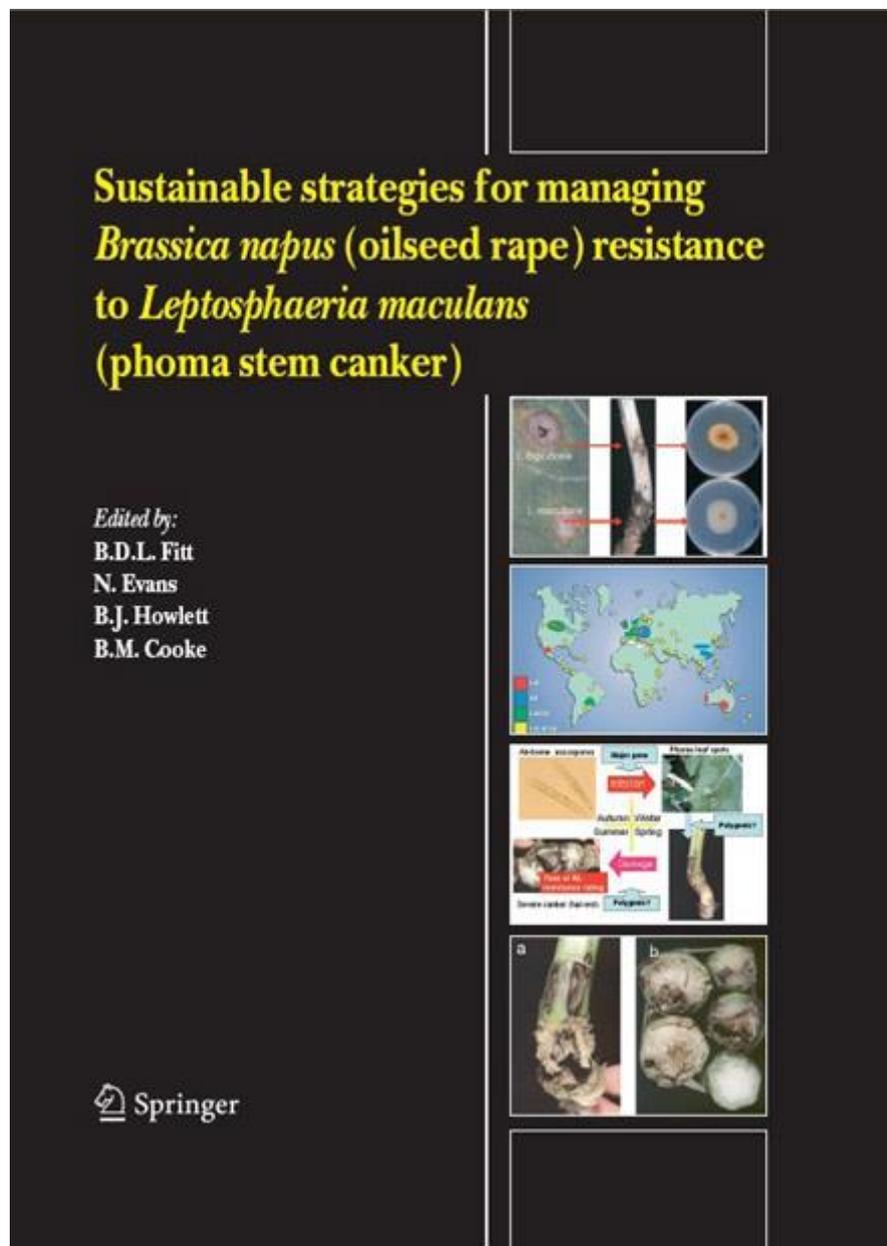
The interaction between the fungus *Leptosphaeria maculans* and oilseed rape (*Brassica napus*) is becoming an excellent model system for studying genetics of host-pathogen interactions. *Leptosphaeria maculans* causes phoma stem canker (blackleg) on oilseed rape and other Brassica crops worldwide (Fitt *et al.*, 2006). Recently, application of molecular techniques has led to increased understanding of the genetics of this hemibiotrophic interaction. The complete sequences of the genomes of *L. maculans* (Kuhn *et al.*, 2006; [www.genoscope.cns.fr/externe/English/Projets/Projet\\_DM/organisme\\_DM.html](http://www.genoscope.cns.fr/externe/English/Projets/Projet_DM/organisme_DM.html)) and *B. rapa* ([www.brassica.info/mbgp/mbgp1.htm](http://www.brassica.info/mbgp/mbgp1.htm)) (comprising the *Brassica A* genome) will be available soon. This will provide new opportunities to investigate basic metabolic pathways in the host and the pathogen, and detailed knowledge of the disease process.

Worldwide, the major strategy for control of phoma stem canker is the use of cultivars with resistance to *L. maculans* (Delourme *et al.*, 2006). However, serious epidemics have occurred recently in Australia and Europe when *L. maculans* populations changed so that major gene resistance in oilseed rape was overcome (Sprague *et al.*, 2006). Thus there is an urgent need to find and deploy sources of resistance to *L. maculans* in a manner that enhances their durability.

This topic was addressed at a workshop (Stem canker durable resistance workshop, Monday 13 September 2004) attended by plant pathologists from Australia and Europe, which was held at INRA (Versailles, France) immediately before the second annual meeting of the European Union-funded SECURE (QLK5-CT-2002-01813) project. A special issue of the European Journal of Plant Pathology was based on papers presented at the workshop, with additional contributions from scientists in Canada, Australia and Europe who were not able to attend. A book based on the special issue has now been published (Fig. 1; Fitt *et al.*, 2006; ISBN: 1-4020-4524-7). To provide an international perspective on each topic, authors of most of the chapters are from several countries. This book provides researchers with a synthesis of the recent studies relating to strategies for management of

resistance genes to provide effective control of *L. maculans* to stimulate further research on this important model system. This book can be obtained directly from Springer

([www.springer.com/uk/home/life+sci/plant+sciences?SGWID=3-10038-22-138799235-0](http://www.springer.com/uk/home/life+sci/plant+sciences?SGWID=3-10038-22-138799235-0)) or from other online book retailers.



**Figure 1.** Book cover, showing phoma stem canker of oilseed rape caused by *Leptosphaeria maculans* and *L. biglobosa*. From top to bottom: symptoms on leaves and stems, worldwide distribution, pathogen life cycle in Europe in relation to host resistance, stem cankers of differing severities.

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Edited by:  
B.D.L. Fitt  
N. Evans  
B.J. Howlett  
B.M. Cooke



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