My strawberry planting is all done for the year, but I'm a little worried now what happens next with all this rain. Won't this moisture become a source of disease and other problems?

Now that strawberry planting is more or less over for the fall, and we have been subjected to significant amounts of rain, your question is not at all uncommon and worth our while to address.

Leaf Blotch Disease: Leaf blotch disease of strawberry, caused by the fungus *Zythia fragaria,* normally is found all over Central Coast strawberry fields this time of year. Being the case that it is dependent on splashing water, it's pretty likely we are going to start seeing some of this fairly soon this year.

Generally the lesions of leaf blotch disease consist of tan to gray leaf blotches that commonly, but not always, develop along the margin or edge of the leaflets. The leaf blotches are irregular in shape and are very often surrounded by a purple margin. Affected areas can grow to some size and are able to expand and cover from 1/4 to 1/2 of the leaflet surface. To distinguish leaf blotch disease from salt damage one needs to look for the presence of tiny, brown to black, fungal fruiting bodies in the gray to tan blotches.

Unnerving at is it to see this disease come up, beyond superficial damage to fruit calyces in strawberry, we have yet to see this become a major problem in inhibiting plant growth and vigor. When the rains end, this disease invariably goes away.

Anthracnose: The anthracnose pathogen, *Colletotrichum acutatum,* is rather unique in that this fungus can infect virtually all parts of the strawberry plant, though some infections are more important than others. Most symptoms on above-ground parts of plants consist of dark, elongated lesions. Critically, the disease is known to thrive in wet conditions accompanied by moderately warm weather (65 to 80 degrees F, which is certainly not the case right now), and as such tends not to be as a big a problem in the northern regions of California as it is in the southern.

However, this disease can be serious if it shows up, especially during rains when it is warm and growers do need to pay attention to it and address it. See below for the UC IPM link below for managing this pathogen.

Fumigant Toxicity: Although it is not related to rain, fumigation toxicity is another, fortunately not too common, issue that one will see this time of year manifested as plant yellowing, stunted growth, leaf burning and spotting. Every case to which I have been called out has been linked to drip fumigation, and this makes sense, since for several reasons drip fumigants take much longer to exit the soil than shanked in materials like our former methyl bromide. The process of the fumigant moving out of the soil is delayed even more because of cooler temperatures following the fumigant application. Situations like this are notable in that the affects appear across the field in a fairly evenly distributed manner.

Each of the issues above is addressed in more detail on the UC IPM Statewide Integrated Pesticide Management website; access the subheading for strawberries:

http://ucipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/selectnewpest.strawberry.html

The above has been a brief survey of issues faced by strawberry growers post planting. Please contact Mark Bolda at UCCE Santa Cruz if you have more questions on this topic or any other topics concerning strawberry, raspberry or blackberry production.