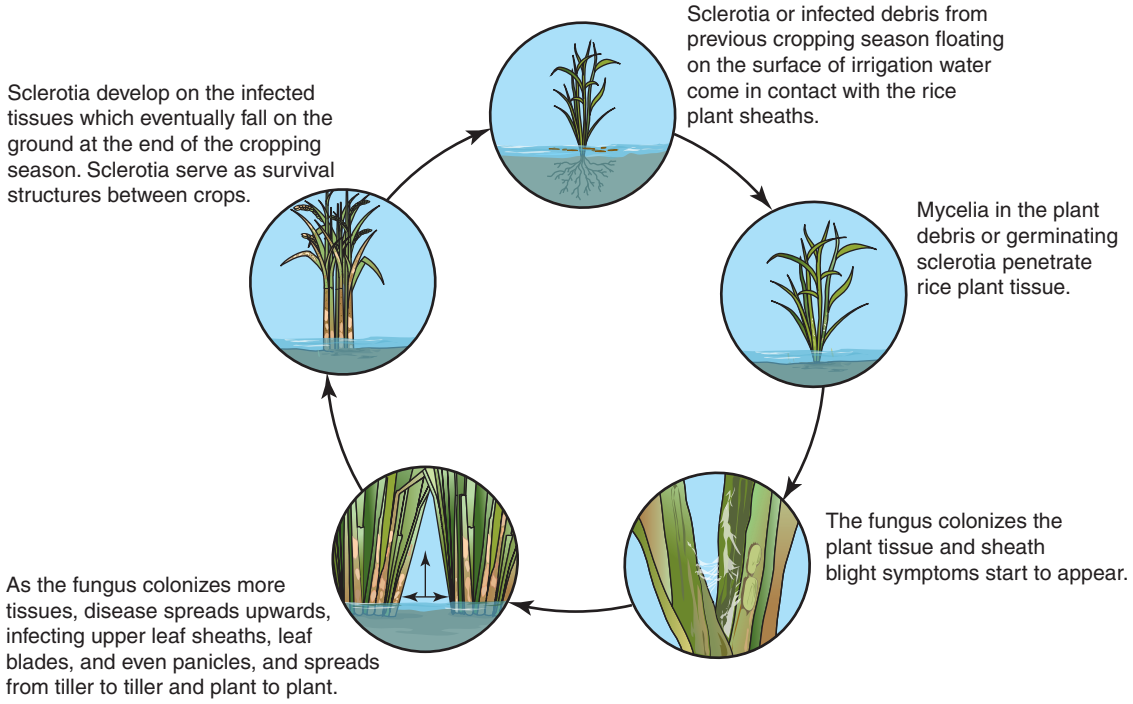
Sclerotia or infected debris from previous cropping season floating on the surface of irrigation water come in contact with the rice plant sheaths.
Mycelia in the plant debris or germinating sclerotia penetrate rice plant tissue.
The fungus colonizes the plant tissue and sheath blight symptoms start to appear.
As the fungus colonizes more tissues, disease spreads upwards, infecting upper leaf sheaths, leaf blades, and even panicles, and spreads from tiller to tiller and plant to plant.
Sclerotia develop on the infected tissues which eventually fall on the ground at the end of the cropping season. Sclerotia serve as survival structures between crops.