

# EPPO Datasheet: *Heterodera glycines*

Last updated: 2023-12-12

## IDENTITY

**Preferred name:** *Heterodera glycines*

**Authority:** Ichinohe

**Taxonomic position:** Animalia: Nematoda: Chromadorea:  
Rhabditida: Heteroderidae

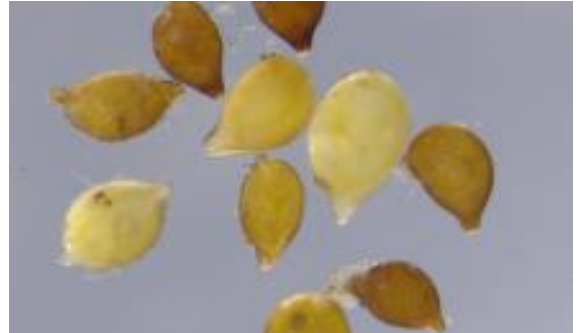
**Common names:** soybean cyst nematode

[view more common names online...](#)

**EPPO Categorization:** A2 list

[view more categorizations online...](#)

**EPPO Code:** HETDGL



[more photos...](#)

## HOSTS

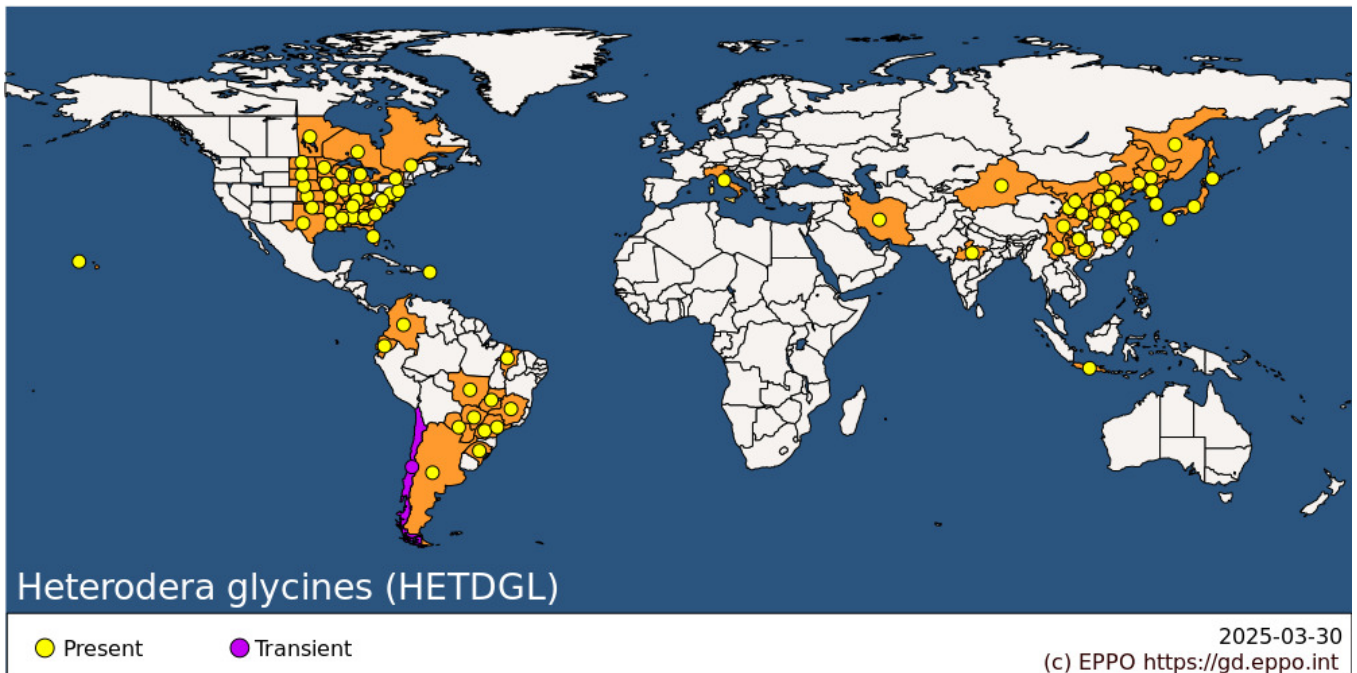
Soybeans are the major economic host of *Heterodera glycines*. It also infests another economically important leguminous crop, dry edible bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) (Poromarto *et al.*, 2010). In general, *H. glycines* has a wide host range, mainly on weeds, of at least 23 families (e.g. Fabaceae, Boraginaceae, Capparaceae, Caryophyllaceae, Chenopodiaceae, Brassicaceae, Lamiaceae, Scrophulariaceae, Solanaceae). Common weed hosts are common mouse-ear chickweed (*Cerastium holosteoides*), henbit *Lamium amplexicaule*), chickweed (*Stellaria media*) and field pennycress *Thlaspi arvense*). See Riggs & Hamblen (1962, 1966), Manuel *et al.* (1981), Riggs (1982), Poromarto *et al.* (2015). Some of the weed species provide an overwintering option for *H. glycines* which increases the risk of infestation in the subsequent growing season.

**Host list:** *Abutilon theophrasti*, *Acacia baileyana*, *Acacia longifolia*, *Aeschynomene indica*, *Aeschynomene virginica*, *Ageratum conyzoides*, *Agrostemma githago*, *Alkekengi officinarum*, *Alysicarpus vaginalis*, *Amaranthus blitoides*, *Amaranthus tuberculatus*, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, *Antirrhinum majus*, *Arctium minus*, *Artemisia biennis*, *Astragalus canadensis*, *Bassia scoparia*, *Bidens pilosa*, *Borago officinalis*, *Cajanus cajan*, *Camelina microcarpa*, *Capsella bursa-pastoris*, *Cardamine parviflora*, *Carum carvi*, *Cerastium holosteoides*, *Cicer arietinum*, *Cirsium arvense*, *Cleome hassleriana*, *Cleome serrulata*, *Commelina benghalensis*, *Crambe maritima*, *Crotalaria brevidens* var. *intermedia*, *Crotalaria juncea*, *Crotalaria lanceolata*, *Crotalaria pallida*, *Cuphea viscosissima*, *Datura stramonium*, *Descurainia pinnata*, *Descurainia sophia*, *Desmodium tortuosum*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Dysphania atriplicifolia*, *Erigeron canadensis*, *Euphorbia esula*, *Fallopia convolvulus*, *Genista canariensis*, *Genista tinctoria*, *Geranium maculatum*, *Glycine max*, *Guizotia abyssinica*, *Hibiscus trionum*, *Indigofera hirsuta*, *Ipomoea hederacea*, *Iva xanthiifolia*, *Kummerowia stipulacea*, *Kummerowia striata*, *Lamium amplexicaule*, *Lamium purpureum*, *Lathyrus cicera*, *Lathyrus sativus*, *Lathyrus tuberosus*, *Leonurus cardiaca*, *Lepidium densiflorum*, *Lespedeza cuneata*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Lunaria annua*, *Lupinus albus*, *Lupinus arboreus*, *Lupinus leucophyllus*, *Lupinus polyphyllus*, *Lupinus wyethii* subsp. *wyethii*, *Macroptilium atropurpureum*, *Malva neglecta*, *Marrubium vulgare*, *Medicago arabica*, *Medicago lupulina*, *Medicago minima*, *Medicago polymorpha*, *Medicago sativa*, *Melilotus albus*, *Melilotus officinalis*, *Nepeta cataria*, *Nicotiana tabacum*, *Nuttallanthus canadensis*, *Oxalis stricta*, *Papaver rhoeas*, *Penstemon albertinus*, *Penstemon bradburyi*, *Penstemon digitalis*, *Penstemon glaber*, *Penstemon nitidus* var. *polyphyllus*, *Persicaria maculosa*, *Phaseolus vulgaris*, *Phytolacca americana*, *Plantago major*, *Polygonum aviculare*, *Portulaca oleracea*, *Robinia pseudoacacia*, *Rumex crispus*, *Salvia reflexa*, *Senecio vulgaris*, *Senna occidentalis*, *Senna tora*, *Sesbania herbacea*, *Sida spinosa*, *Silene noctiflora*, *Sinapis arvensis*, *Sisymbrium altissimum*, *Sisymbrium irio*, *Solanum rostratum*, *Solanum villosum*, *Sonchus arvensis*, *Spartium junceum*, *Stellaria media*, *Strophostyles helvola*, *Taraxacum officinale*, *Thlaspi arvense*, *Trifolium arvense*, *Trifolium aureum*, *Trifolium campestre*, *Trifolium hybridum*, *Trifolium incarnatum*, *Trifolium repens*, *Tripleurospermum maritimum*, *Ulex europaeus*, *Verbascum thapsus*, *Vicia benghalensis*, *Vicia hirsuta*, *Vicia sativa*, *Vicia tetrasperma*, *Vicia villosa*, *Vigna angularis*, *Vigna radiata*, *Vigna unguiculata*, *Viscaria vulgaris*, *Wisteria floribunda*, *Wisteria sinensis*, *Xanthium strumarium*

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

The first report of *H. glycines* was from Japan in 1916. Earlier observations date back to 1881. In 1938 the nematode was reported from Manchuria (then an independent state, now in China) and then from several other parts of Asia, including the Amur District in Russia. It was first detected in the USA in North Carolina in 1954 and has spread throughout almost all the soybean-producing areas of the USA and Canada except West Virginia and Prince Edward Island (Tylka & Marett, 2021). It is most likely that *H. glycines* originated in Asia and was introduced from Asia to North America with infested soil in the nineteenth century; it subsequently spread in the Americas with the extension and intensification of soybean cultivation (Niblack & Schmitt, 2008).

In 2000, *H. glycines* was detected in Italy; it was found in three fields of soybeans in Pavia, Lombardia (Manachini, 2000). It is suspected that the species may have been already present for a number of years, as damage symptoms had been observed since 1998. Subsequently, the nematode was also found in a small number of soybean fields in Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia (Perin *et al.*, 2021).



**EPPO Region:** Italy (mainland), Russia (Far East)

**Asia:** China (Anhui, Beijing, Gansu, Guangxi, Guizhou, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hubei, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Jilin, Liaoning, Neimenggu, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanghai, Shanxi, Sichuan, Xinjiang, Yunnan, Zhejiang), India (Madhya Pradesh), Indonesia (Java), Iran, Islamic Republic of, Japan (Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu), Korea, Democratic People's Republic of, Korea, Republic of

**North America:** Canada (Manitoba, Ontario, Québec), United States of America (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin)

**Central America and Caribbean:** Puerto Rico

**South America:** Argentina, Brazil (Goias, Maranhao, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, Parana, Rio Grande do Sul, Sao Paulo), Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay

## BIOLOGY

*H. glycines* is a dioecious cyst-forming species which has six life stages including eggs, four stages of juveniles and adults. First-stage juveniles (J1) molt to second-stage (J2) within the eggs and may hatch under stimulation from exudates from host roots. They invade the root and begin feeding on a group of cells which become modified into a

multinucleate syncytium. While continuing to feed at this site, they then become immobile and molt into third-stage juveniles (J3), fourth-stage (J4), and adult females or males. The female nematode remains at this feeding site as it develops through the vermiform juvenile stages into the swollen adult form. The swelling of the female disrupts the tissues of the host root and the body of the nematode finally protrudes from the surface. The males remain vermiform; they leave the root and are attracted towards the female, and this is where copulation takes place. Eggs are formed within the female and some are laid into an egg sac or 'gelatinous matrix' outside the female body. Males may sometimes be found in the gelatinous matrix. When the yellowish-white lemon-shaped female dies, the body becomes a hardened protective brown cyst enclosing the eggs. One cyst may contain as many as 500 eggs.

The life cycle of *H. glycines* may take about 24-30 days to complete. In the field, there are three to five generations per year. Optimum development occurs at 23–28°C; development stops below 14°C and above 34°C (Riggs, 1982; Burrows & Stone, 1985). Survival of a small percentage of juveniles has been observed after 6 months at minus 24°C (Slack & Hamblen, 1961). In the absence of a host, eggs within cysts may remain viable in soil for 6–8 years (Slack *et al.*, 1972).

Riggs & Schmidt (1988) proposed a race system based on the reaction of four host differentials to attack by *H. glycines*; sixteen such races were identified. Niblack *et al.* (2002) reported system to classify populations of *H. glycines* based on their abilities to infest and reproduce on seven soybean differential lines as additional sources of resistance had been found since the first system was developed, allowing identification of more virulence groups.

## DETECTION AND IDENTIFICATION

### Symptoms

Affected plants show stunting and chlorosis (yellow dwarf disease), usually occurring as oval patches in the field. At low to moderate infestation levels, there is over-production of lateral roots. A low rate of nodulation may also be observed. In areas of intensive soybean production (e.g. the Midwest USA), soybean fields can have up to 30% yield reduction without showing any obvious above-ground symptoms of *H. glycines* infestation.

### Morphology

*H. glycines* belongs to a group of many similar species of *Heterodera*, and, thus, identification can require considerable experience. Note that *H. glycines* has been shown to hybridize with *H. schachtii* (Moller, 1983), and this could further complicate identification. For reliable morphological identification, at least cyst and second-stage juvenile specimens are necessary. Characters of the vulval cone of the cyst and, the length of stylet, tail and hyaline tail terminus of the second stage juvenile, should be measured. The shape of the juvenile stylet knobs is an additional character. Detailed and illustrated keys to the species of *Heterodera* are given by Mulvey & Golden (1983), Wouts (1985) and Golden (1986). For measurements see Burrows & Stone (1985) and the EPPO diagnostic protocol (EPPO, 2018). Taylor (1975), Hesling (1978), Graney & Miller (1982) and Mulvey & Golden (1983) give comparative measurements of related species. It should be noted that measurements may vary with hosts and geographical isolates.

### Detection and inspection methods

In the field, during the growing season white-yellow females may be seen with the naked eye on host roots 4–6 weeks after planting, if the infestation is heavy. Soil sampling is considered the best method to detect *H. glycines* in the field before and after the growing season. Guidance on sampling is available in the EPPO Standard on procedures for official control of *H. glycines* (EPPO, 2008).

Cysts may be extracted from soil, substrates or packing materials after suitable preparation, using the Fenwick can, the Schuiling centrifuge, the sieving and decanting or other suitable techniques. The motile second-stage juveniles and males may be extracted from fresh soil and other substrates by sugar flotation techniques, Baermann funnel techniques or their modifications.

Additional differentiation between species using biological tests on suitable host plants may be useful, but can take

6–8 weeks. Cysts of *H. glycines* can be differentiated from other *Heterodera* spp. by polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis of the enzyme superoxide dismutase (Molinari *et al.*, 1996). Various DNA-based molecular methods have been developed to distinguish *H. glycines* from similar cyst nematode species (Ou *et al.*, 2008; Baidoo *et al.*, 2017; Baidoo & Yan, 2021).

Guidance on extraction, detection and identification of *H. glycines* is provided in two EPPO Diagnostics Standards (EPPO, 2013, 2018).

## **PATHWAYS FOR MOVEMENT**

The nematode itself is completely sedentary except a small amount of independent movement (at most, a few centimetres) by juveniles and males. However, the durability of the cyst allows considerable passive transport. Movement of the infested soil can result in the nematode movement (Arjoune *et al.*, 2022), for example via farming tools, wind, flooding, birds and other animals, infested seed, plant parts, and footwear. The infested soil particles may adhere to the farming equipment and machinery and be transported to a new area. Cysts with viable juveniles have been recovered from excrement of birds (Epps, 1971). International transport is most likely to occur with soil or growing medium attached to plants or seeds; *H. glycines* was shown to be viable for up to 8 months in soil particles mixed with seed stocks (Epps, 1969). Nematodes can also be readily carried in the roots of plants.

## **PEST SIGNIFICANCE**

## Economic impact

*Heterodera glycines* is a major pest of soybeans in Asia and the USA. In Japan, yield loss in infested plants was estimated to be 10–75% (Inagaki, 1977; Ichinohe, 1988). In the USA, this nematode is responsible for more than 1.2 billion USD in yield losses (Koenning & Wrather, 2010). This nematode caused soybean yield losses of up to 617.4 billion bushels in 28 states in the USA and in Ontario, Canada during 2010 to 2014 (Allen *et al.*, 2017). *H. glycines* is also a pest on *Phaseolus vulgaris* (Yan *et al.*, 2017). In dry edible bean, field research has demonstrated that *H. glycines* can cause seed yield reduction up to 50% in susceptible cultivars (Poromarto *et al.*, 2010). It also affects nodule formation on roots by interfering with the activity of nitrogen-fixing bacteria. *Heterodera glycines* can facilitate infection by other pathogens or enhance severity of other diseases in soybean such as sudden death syndrome and brown stem rot.

## Control

Once in the field, it is almost impossible to eliminate *H. glycines* completely, so it is important to prevent the nematode spreading to new fields. The nematodes in infested fields can be controlled by the use of resistant cultivars, crop rotation and nematode-protectant seed treatments or, more effectively, by nematicides in combination with long crop rotation and the use of resistant cultivars in a flexible integrated plant production system. New resistant cultivars and germplasm are sought, since populations of resistance-breaking pathotypes are developing in the field.

## Phytosanitary risk

Based on the distribution of *H. glycines* in Asia and the Americas and its wide host range, it must be assumed that this nematode could survive in the warmer and temperate areas of the EPPO region. Its presence in Northern Italy demonstrates that it has the potential to establish, at least in some parts of the EPPO region. However, *H. glycines* would only establish itself and become a pest of economic importance where the principal host, soybeans, are widely cultivated in close rotations or monoculture.

Although soybean has not in the past been a significant crop in the EPPO region, in 2007 the EPPO member countries together produced about 2% of the world output of soybeans. Croatia, France, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Romania, the Russian Federation and Ukraine are soybean producers (FAOSTAT, 2007). With the rising demand for plant proteins, the soybean production areas across Europe have increased rapidly in recent years, with a production up to 2.9 million tonnes in 2018 (FAOSTAT, 2022). This makes it particularly important to exclude soybean pests not yet introduced into the region, and to limit the spread of pests that are not widely present.

## PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Imports of soil, rooted plants and seed with soil from countries where this nematode occurs should be restricted.

## REFERENCES

- Allen TW, Bradley CA, Sisson AJ, Byamukama E, Chilvers MI, Coker CM, *et al.* (2017) Soybean yield loss estimates due to diseases in the United States and Ontario, Canada, from 2010 to 2014. *Plant Health Progress* **18**, 19–27.
- Arjoune Y, Sugunraj N, Peri S, Nair SV, Skurdal A, Ranganathan P & Johnson B (2022) Soybean cyst nematode detection and management: a review. *Plant Methods* **18**, 110. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13007-022-00933-8>
- Baidoo R & Yan GP (2021) Developing a real-time PCR assay for direct identification and quantification of soybean cyst nematode, *Heterodera glycines*, in soil and its discrimination from sugar beet cyst nematode, *Heterodera schachtii*. *Plant Disease* **105**, 3848–3857.
- Baidoo R, Yan GP, Nelson B, Skantar AM & Chen S (2017) Use of chemical flocculation and nested PCR for *Heterodera glycines*

- detection in DNA extracts from field soils with low population densities. *Plant Disease* **101**, 1153-1161.
- Burrows PR & Stone AR (1985) *Heterodera glycines*. *CIH Descriptions of Plant-Parasitic Nematodes* No. 118. CABI, Wallingford (GB).
- Diab KA (1968) Occurrence of *Heterodera glycines* on the Golden Island, Giza, UAR. *Nematologica* **14**, p. 148.
- EPPO (2008) EPPO Standards. National regulatory control systems. PM 9/6(1) *Heterodera glycines*: procedures for official control. *EPPO Bulletin* **38**(3), 410-413.
- EPPO (2013) EPPO Standards. Diagnostics. PM 7/119(1) Nematode extraction. *EPPO Bulletin* **43**(3), 471-495.
- EPPO (2018) EPPO Standards. Diagnostics. PM 7/89(2) *Heterodera glycines*. *EPPO Bulletin* **48**(1), 64-77.
- Epps JM (1969) Survival of the soybean cyst nematode in seed stocks. *Plant Disease Reporter* **53**, 403-405.
- Epps JM (1971) Recovery of soybean cyst nematode *Heterodera glycines* from digestive tract of birds. *Journal of Nematology* **3**, 417-419.
- FAOSTAT (2007) <http://faostat.fao.org> [accessed 2009-09-01].
- FAOSTAT (2022) <http://faostat.fao.org> [accessed 2023-09-15].
- Golden AM (1986) Morphology and identification of cyst nematodes. In: *Cyst Nematodes* (Ed. Lamberti F & Taylor CE), pp. 23-45. Plenum Press, New York (US).
- Graney LSO & Miller LI (1982) Comparative morphological studies of *Heterodera schachtii* and *H. glycines*. In: *Nematology in the Southern Region of the United States* (Ed. Riggs RD), pp. 96-107. Southern Cooperative Series Research Bulletin No. 276.
- Hesling JJ (1978) Cyst nematodes: morphology and identification of *Heterodera*, *Globodera* and *Punctodera*. In: *Plant Nematology* (Ed. Southey JF), pp. 125-155. HMSO, London (GB).
- Ichinohe M (1988) Current research on the major nematode problems in Japan. *Journal of Nematology* **20**, 184-190.
- Inagaki H (1977) Soybean nematodes. *Technical Bulletin*, ASPAC Food & Fertilizer Technology Center, Taipei (TW), No. 31, 17 pp.
- Koenning SR & Wrather JA (2010). Suppression of soybean yield potential in the continental United States from plant diseases estimated from 2006 to 2009. *Plant Health Progress*, <https://doi.org/10.1094/PHP-2010-1122-01-RS>
- Manachini B (2000) First report of *Heterodera glycines* Ichinohe on soybean in Italy. *Bolletino di Zoologia Agraria e di Bachicoltura*, Serie II **32**, 261-267.
- Manuel JS, Bendixen LE & Riedel RM (1981) Weed hosts of *Heterodera glycines*: the soybean cyst nematode. Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center Research Bulletin No. 1138.
- Miller LI (1983) Diversity of selected taxa of *Globodera* and *Heterodera* and their interspecific hybrids. In: *Concepts in nematode systematics* (Ed. Stone AR, Platt HM & Khalil LF), pp. 207-220. Academic Press, London (GB).
- Molinari S, Evans K, Rowe J & Russell M (1996) Identification of *Heterodera* cysts by SOD isozyme electrophoresis profiles. *Annals of applied Biology* **129**, 361-368.
- Mulvey RH & Golden AM (1983) An illustrated key to the cyst-forming genera and species of Heteroderidae in the Western Hemisphere with species morphometrics and distribution. *Journal of Nematology* **15**, 1-59.
- Niblack TL & Schmitt DP (2008) The science and art of soybean cyst research. In: *An Anecdotal History of Nematology*

(Ed. Webster JM, Eriksson KB & McNamara DG), pp. 137–151. Pensoft, Sofia, Bulgaria/ Moscow (RU).

Niblack TL, Arelli PR, Noel GR, Opperman CH, Orf J, Schmitt DP, Shannon JG & Tylka GL (2002) A revised classification scheme for genetically diverse populations of *Heterodera glycines*. *Journal of Nematology* **34**, 279–288.

Ou S, Peng D, Liu X, Li Y & Moens M (2008) Identification of *Heterodera glycines* using PCR with sequence characterised amplified region (SCAR) primers. *Nematology* **10**(3), 397–403.

Perin S, Governatori G & Braghin A (2021) Primo ritrovamento del nematode cisticolo della soia (*Heterodera glycines*) in Friuli Venezia Giulia. *Notiziario ERSA* no. 1, 28-30.

Poromarto SH, Nelson BD & Goswami RS (2010) Effect of soybean cyst nematode on growth of dry bean in the field. *Plant Disease* **94**, 1299-1304.

Poromarto SH, Gramig GG, Nelson BD & Jain S (2015) Evaluation of weed species from the Northern Great Plains as hosts of soybean cyst nematode. *Plant Health Progress* **16**, 23-28.

Riggs RD (1982) Cyst nematodes in the Southern USA. In: *Nematology in the Southern Region of the United States* (Ed. Riggs RD), pp. 77–95. *Cooperative Series Research Bulletin* No. 276.

Riggs RD & Hamblen ML (1962) Soybean cyst nematode host studies in the family Fabaceae. *Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station Report Series* No. 110.

Riggs RD & Hamblen ML (1966) Further studies on the host range of the soybean cyst nematode. *Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station Report Series* No. 118.

Riggs RD & Schmitt DP (1988) Complete characterization of the race scheme of *Heterodera glycines*. *Journal of Nematology* **20**, 392–395.

Slack DA & Hamblen ML (1961) The effect of various factors on larvae emergence from cysts of *Heterodera glycines*. *Phytopathology* **51**, 350–355.

Slack DA, Riggs RD, Hamblen ML (1972) The effect of various factors and moisture on the survival of *Heterodera glycines* in the absence of a host. *Journal of Nematology* **4**, 263–266.

Taylor AL (1975) Identification of soybean cyst nematodes for regulatory purposes. *Proceedings, Soil and Crop Science Society of Florida* **34**, 200–206.

Tylka GL & Marett CC (2021) Known distribution of the soybean cyst nematode, *Heterodera glycines*, in the United States and Canada in 2020. *Plant Health Progress*, <https://doi.org/10.1094/PHP-10-20-0094-BR>

Wouts WM (1985) Phylogenetic classification of the family Heteroderidae. *Systematic Parasitology* **7**, 295–328.

Yan GP, Plaisance A, Chowdhury I, Baidoo R, Upadhaya A, Pasche J, Markell S, Nelson B & Chen S (2017) First report of the soybean cyst nematode *Heterodera glycines* infecting dry bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.) in a commercial field in Minnesota. *Plant Disease* **101**, 391.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This datasheet was revised in 2023 by Dr. Guiping Yan, North Dakota State University. Her valuable contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

## How to cite this datasheet?

EPPO (2025) *Heterodera glycines*. EPPO datasheets on pests recommended for regulation. Available online. <https://gd.eppo.int>

## Datasheet history

This datasheet was first published in the EPPO Bulletin in 1989 and revised in the two editions of 'Quarantine Pests for Europe' in 1992 and 1997, as well as in 2023. It is now maintained in an electronic format in the EPPO Global Database. The sections on 'Identity', 'Hosts', and 'Geographical distribution' are automatically updated from the database. For other sections, the date of last revision is indicated on the right.

CABI/EPPO (1992/1997) *Quarantine Pests for Europe (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*. CABI, Wallingford (GB).

EPPO (1983) Data sheets on quarantine organisms No. 167, *Heterodera glycines*. *EPPO Bulletin* **19**, 683–688.



Co-funded by the  
European Union