

TOMATO AND POTATO LATE BLIGHT ALERT



WHAT EVERY GROWER
NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT
TOMATO AND POTATO
LATE BLIGHT

MICHIGAN
Potato Diseases



www.potatodiseases.org

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INDUSTRY COMMISSION

13109 Schavey Rd., Suite 7
Dewitt, MI 48820
517-669-8377
info@mipotato.com
www.mipotato.com

This year the disease known as late blight has affected many tomato and potato crops throughout the northern states. The disease is thought to have started in tomato transplants. Once the disease has taken hold of the plant there is very little that can be done to halt its progress to other plants other than destruction of the affected plants. Unaffected plants can be protected with fungicides but by now few growers remain untouched by this disease.

- The new strain of this disease can infect and kill plants within 10 days.
- The disease can spread from tomato to potato plants and to surrounding gardens and commercial fields.
- The spores of this disease can be carried in the air.
- In the past, losses of potatoes due to late blight have caused farming businesses to close throughout Michigan.

What can you do right now?

Tomatoes and Potatoes

- Destroy plants that have symptoms like those on the photographs on the front page.
- **Fungicides are available for small growers and gardeners that can prevent the disease from spreading between plants and crops. Such products are Daconil or Manzate (home gardeners) or an alternative would be Echo 720 (farmers).**
- Water plants in the evening to allow a drying period during the day.
- Fungicides should be applied every seven days or as directed on the label. Apply in water at a rate of 50 gal/A.
- Copper fungicides are less effective than those mentioned above but will help on plants that are not infected (can mix Coppers with Daconil/Echo).
- If symptoms develop (such as those on the front page) pull up the diseased plant from the roots, place in a plastic bag, seal the bag and dispose of the bag without reopening it. The spores of this disease can be carried in the air.
- Check plants daily and dispose of diseased plants immediately.
- Destroy affected plants with Reglone or other like product (farmers) if removal is not possible.
- Leave diseased tubers and waste tomatoes on the surface of the ground to freeze over winter.

Potatoes

- After harvest, check tubers regularly as infected tubers can quickly decompose. Discard infected tubers in a sealed plastic bag.

Professional/commercial growers have difficulty growing disease-free crops. Please help to maintain businesses and jobs in your area by following the above guidelines.

Michigan Department of Agriculture has the authority to declare an area a nuisance and to eliminate the source of late blight inoculum in order to prevent the spread of disease to farmer's crops.

For further assistance contact your local County Cooperative Extension Office.