

Immediate Press Release – September 1, 2015

Vijai Pandian, Horticulture Educator
Brown County UW-Extension
1150 Bellevue St.
Green Bay, WI 54302
Vijai.Pandian@ces.uwex.edu
920-391-4611

Tomato Late Blight Disease Confirmed in Brown County

Late blight, a highly destructive disease of potato and tomato plants, has just been confirmed in Brown County. This disease has been detected in home gardens and commercial tomato farm fields in Brown County. Late blight is a communal plant disease in vegetable gardens where its fungal spores can quickly spread by wind and can wipe out tomato and potato plants within 7 to 10 days. This year, 13 counties in Wisconsin have already reported late blight infection in tomatoes and potato crops. **Gardeners are highly encouraged to scout their tomato plants and take preventive measures against late blight disease immediately.** Scout your vegetable garden daily and bring infected foliar samples of your tomato and potato plants to the UW Extension office for proper diagnosis.

Symptoms:

Symptoms of late blight disease in tomato begin in the leaf tissue where pale green or olive green patches develop along the margins or at the tips of the leaves and quickly enlarge to become a brown-blackish water soaked lesion. In early morning hours, you can witness a circle of white-gray fuzzy growth underneath the infected leaf surface. Stems can develop dark brown to black lesions, and infected fruit quickly form sunken spots or a golden to chocolate brown lesion with distinct rings around it.

In potatoes, symptoms of brown-water soaked lesions develop on the leaves with white sporulation underneath. On tubers, the disease develops dark brown to purple discoloration.

What to do with the infected plants:

Once confirmed for late blight, remove the infected tomato and potato plants entirely (including stems, roots, fruit, and tubers) and place them in black plastic bag and seal tightly. Place the bag in full sun for at least a week until the plants are completely killed. Then place the sealed bag on the curb for trash pickup.

If you have a large number of infected plants, pull the plants and pile them under full sun. Cover the pile with a dark colored plastic tarp, and seal the edges to the ground using bricks or any other heavy weight objects. Leave the pile undisturbed for a few days until the plants are completely destroyed.

Do not compost the infected plants. Infected fruits and tubers should also be destroyed.

How to prevent late blight now:

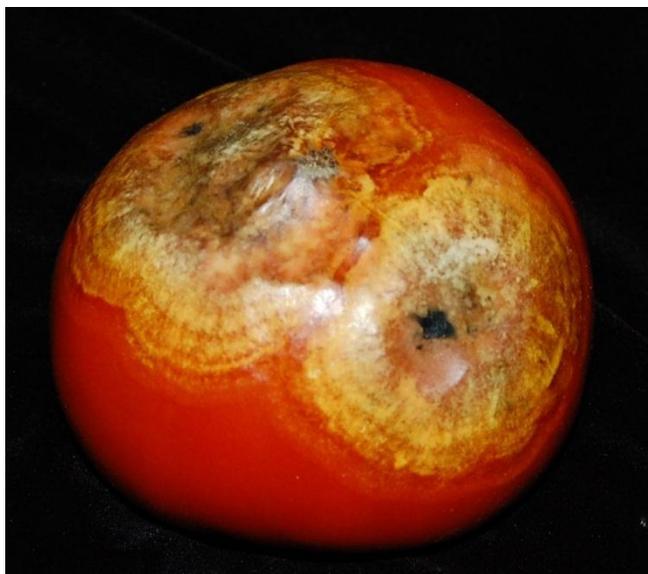
Apply preventive fungicide immediately to protect your healthy tomato and potato plants from the late blight disease. Under cool, wet periods multiple applications are needed. **Fungicide products containing active ingredients like chlorothalonil or copper can be used.** Organic gardeners can use copper based fungicide

products, but make sure to check if the copper fungicide product is labeled as organic by OMRI. Always read the label and follow its instruction.

Common fungicides products for tomato late blight prevention:

Organic copper fungicide products: Copper Fungicide, Copper Soap, Dragon Dust, Earth Tone, Garden Dust

Chlorothalonil fungicide products: Daconil, Fung-onil, Ortho Max Disease Control



Infected fruit have chocolate brown lesions with distinct rings



White fuzzy growth underneath the infected leaves



Infected leaves turn brown-blackish water soaked lesions



Olive green patches along the margins of leaves