



Early Blight

About Early Blight

Early Blight is common on tomatoes and potatoes primarily on stressed or senescing plants. The disease leads to crop loss by damping off, rotting of leaves, and fruit rots. Spores of early blight are carried by wind and require moisture for germination and infection. The disease can cause severe damage if conditions remain cool and humid for several days after a rain.



Damage

Early Blight produces a wide range of symptoms including black or brown spots, usually about 1 cm in diameter. Lesions can appear on leaves, stems, and fruit.



Lesions often have concentric rings to give a characteristic target-board effect.

Leaves: Early blight usually appears first on the oldest leaves. Affected leaves develop circular to angular dark brown lesions 3 to 4 mm in diameter. Concentric rings often form in lesions to produce a characteristic target-board effect. Severely infected leaves turn yellow and drop.

Stems: Dark brown lesions develop on stems in later stages of the disease.

Fruit: Fruit spots are sunken and dry and also have a concentric pattern. On potatoes, infected tubers show a brown, corky dry rot.

Solutions

Cultural control: Early blight can be minimized by

- maintaining optimum growing conditions, including proper fertilization, irrigation, and management of other pests.
- Grow later maturing, longer season varieties.
- Avoid overhead irrigation.
- Rotate crops in infested fields.

Chemical control: Copper fungicides applied at the first sign of infestation and repeated every 7 to 10 days may provide control. Always follow instructions and safety procedures when applying agrochemicals.

Source: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/index.html> ;

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