

On 9/15/2014 6:29 PM, Michael wrote:

Hi Ann,

At the Master Gardener Table at the Burlington Farmers Market we get questions quite often about late blight and what to do about it.

We are getting more and more questions about what to do to stop it from coming back. Some are from people with hoop houses or greenhouses. Some are from people with outside traditional gardens. Some are from farmers with both situations, covered and not.

What advice can you recommend that we can give out?

Any particular advice we can give out about how to prevent late blight from coming back, especially if it is difficult to impossible to avoid reusing the same ground either in a house or uncovered?

Thanks and regards,
..michael..

A few key points about late blight:

There is **NO** way to stop it from coming back. It is all luck and Mother Nature. This disease **DOES NOT OVERWINTER IN THE NORTHEAST**. It comes in on storm fronts from the south and leap frogs its' way up to VT usually by the end of the summer. It can also be **INTRODUCED** through plants at garden centers, big box stores that have shipped up from the south already infected as happened in 2009.

SO, for this disease rotation is not necessary since it **DOES NOT OVERWINTER IN THE NORTHEAST**..Also, it doesn't matter if you compost this material, but it should not be done because other tomato diseases can live on dead tissue in a non-hot compost pile. Gardeners/farmers should also rotate because **OTHER** tomato diseases (early blight, septoria leafspot will overwinter on dead tomato tissue.)

The **ONLY** way this disease can overwinter in Vermont is on **live** tissue, ie you keep infected plants in a greenhouse all winter..Or if your potato tubers have the disease (from sporangia washing into the soil from infected foliage) and they do not get harvested. **IF** they live over the winter and don't freeze and sprout in the spring, they could carry the disease. Therefore we recommend everyone harvest everything, do not put tubers in the compost pile and plant something other than potatoes/tomatoes in the same area so gardeners can see and destroy volunteers.

Greenhouses offer some protection as long as the humidity is always below 85%. That rarely happens in VT due to rain and high humidity outside so gh do also get infected.

For organic growers, copper products have shown the best results. For conventional growers, there are lots of fungicides available (chlorothalonil, etc) that will protect the plants once it is in our area.

Hope that helps!! Let me know if you have further questions.

Ann