

Late Blight Alert

July 23, 2012, Clinton County – The Cornell Lab has confirmed late blight in tomatoes in a small home garden just north of Plattsburgh, NY. Cornell Cooperative Extension educators are urging growers who spray to prevent late blight to begin now.

The disease was spreading slowly through the home garden planting, likely because of the hot, dry weather. (Wet, cool, windy weather are the ideal conditions for the spread and establishment of this disease.)

CCE Clinton County Executive Director and Horticultural Educator Amy Ivy says Chris Smart, a plant pathologist at the Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, suspects that spores are quite widespread now in New York. Late blight was confirmed in Syracuse and the Hudson Valley last week.

Anyone who intends to spray should start now. This is especially true for organic growers as a copper treatment is most effective when used as a preventative. Once late blight establishes, copper cannot stop it. Conventional growers should have ridomil on hand. Copper is harsh to your skin – handle it with caution and follow all label directions!

For a refresher on late blight identification on tomatoes & potatoes go to the Photo Gallery of Vegetable Diseases at:
<http://www.longislandhort.cornell.edu/vegpath/photos/index.htm>. Scroll down to Potatoes or Tomatoes, Late Blight. Also click on Late Blight Imitators for a comparison.

Report new sightings or suspicions

Anyone with new infestations, or anything suspicious on tomatoes or potatoes, is asked to bring leaf and stem samples, sealed in a plastic bag, to your nearest CCE office. CCE will send the samples to the Cornell Lab at no charge.

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