

# CONSUMER ALERT

## 2010 Update on Tomato & Potato Late Blight

Last year's infected POTATO crop may be the infecting agent on this years potato and tomato crops.

Infected potato tubers left in the ground over the winter may carry the disease again this year. Anyone who grew potato's last year should follow these precautionary measures:

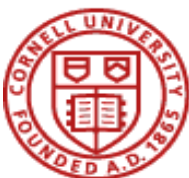
- Do not plant potatoes in the same place again this year.
- Instead plant another low growing crop in that area.
- Quickly remove any potato plants that come up from last years crop.
- Dispose by double bagging and placing them in the trash. Do not burn or compost.
- Use only certified disease free potato seeds or tubers

**Potato/Tomato Late Blight is a highly contagious air borne disease that can spread over several MILES. There is no cure and there is nothing you can add to the soil to prevent infection.**

Practicing sound gardening techniques will help reduce the destruction from diseases and pests.

- Have your soil tested for nutrients and pH.
- Practice crop rotation
- Use disease resistant varieties

Have more gardening questions?  
Call the Oneida County Horticulture Hotline.  
Master Gardeners are available to answer your calls  
Wednesday and Friday  
9AM-Noon. 736-3394



**CONSUMER**

**ALERT**



# 2009 Late Blight on Tomato & Potato Found in Oneida County!!!!

This is a highly contagious airborne Plant disease that can quickly spread to other gardens and Fields!

If you suspect your plants are infected

**DO NOT**

bring contaminated material to local garden centers for identification.

Instead visit

<http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/oneida/>

or contact

**Cornell Cooperative**

**Extension of Oneida County at**

**736-3394**

**DISEASE DESCRIPTION:** This caused the Irish potato famine and can knock down a crop within a week. Classic symptoms are large (at least nickel sized) olive green to brown spots on leaves. When conditions have been humid (early morning or after rain) fuzzy white fungal growth may appear on the underside of leaf. Sometimes the lesion border is yellow or has a water-soaked appearance. Leaf lesions begin as tiny, irregularly shaped brown spots. Brown to blackish lesions also develop on upper stems. Firm, brown spots develop on tomato fruit.

**TREATMENT:** There is no treatment once the plant is infected. To prevent the spread of this disease double bag infected plants and place in the trash.

*Do not compost!!!!!!!!!!*

**PREVENTION:** If your plants have not been infected apply fungicides containing **CHLOROTHALONIL** follow the manufactures instructions.



This information is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Cornell Cooperative Extension is implied.

Some of the products listed above may be legal for use only on tomatoes, some only on potatoes, and some are legal for use on both. Check the pesticide label for specific directions and follow them exactly. Pesticide labels are considered legal documents; if you do not follow the label directions you are breaking the law.

Additional products may be available for commercial use. Commercial applicators should refer to the appropriate commercial pest management guidelines, or contact their local Cooperative Extension Office for more information on currently registered products. The Cornell *Integrated Crop & Pest Management Guidelines for Commercial Vegetable Production* is currently available on-line. See: <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/recommends/>.

Some **chlorothalonil** products registered in NYS for "home garden" use for Late Blight and/or Early Blight on potato and tomato, and for Septoria Leaf Spot on tomato are listed below. Note: Additional products may be available. Early Blight and Septoria Leaf Spot are other common diseases we are seeing on plants during the 2009 growing season in NYS.

Bonide Fung-onil Multi-purpose Fungicide: EPA Reg # 4-410,

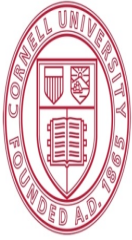
Bonide Fung-onil Multi-purpose Fungicide Concentrate: EPA Reg # 60063-9-4,

Fruit Tree, Vegetable & Ornamental Fungicide: EPA Reg # 60063-9-54705,

Garden Disease Control Concentrate - Ortho Group: EPA Reg # 239-2522,

Gardentech Daconil Fungicide Concentrate: EPA Reg # 67572-82-71004, or

Gardentech Daconil Fungicide RTU: EPA Reg # 67572-2-71004



**Cornell University**  
**Cooperative Extension**  
**Oneida County**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Press Contact:** Lynette S Kay  
**Phone Number:** 315-736-3394 ext. 105  
**Email:** lsk23@cornell.edu

**For Release:**  
Immediate  
July 28, 2009

So you've got the Late Blight! Now What!!!!

As many of you know (because you have had to destroy your entire Tomato crop) Late Blight arrived early and with a vengeance in upstate New York. Those of you who still have healthy tomato or potato plants should start a fungicide treatment immediately. Look for products containing the chemical Chlorothalonil. Follow the manufactures instructions for application rates.

If you do have Late Blight here is what you need to know and do!

- Confirm that it is late blight visit these two websites:  
<http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/oneida/tomato%20blight.pdf>  
<http://vegetablemndonline.ppath.cornell.edu/>
- If it is Late Blight remove plants. Dispose of by double bagging and putting in the trash. Do not compost!
- This highly contagious air-borne disease will not survive our freezing winters in the soil. Therefore you do not have to treat the soil. However it is very important to practice crop rotation. Do not plant: potato, tomato or peppers in the same spot next year as these plants not only belong to the same family, they also absorb and require the same nutrients. Nutrient poor soil leads to plant stress and disease susceptibility.
- If you have Late Blight on Potato, this is the disease that caused the Irish potato famine that killed millions of people. The disease itself is not harmful to people, so yes it is safe to cut out or around the diseased parts and eat the potato or tomato. So, why the famine? Because the diseased potato will not keep for long periods of time, the cool conditions where potatoes are stored is not cold enough to kill the spores, causing next years crop to be infected.

So what do you do with that empty space where your tomatoes/potatoes once were?

Tony Salerno, Master Gardener and vegetable guru says "don't let that garden space go to waste. Improve the soil for next year, plant a cover crop or use the space for bush beans, beets, carrots, broccoli, cabbage or garlic."

Visit the Home & Garden, Fact Sheet, section of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida Counties website for help on your home gardening needs [www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida/](http://www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida/)

**July 29, 2009**

## **Northeast Tomatoes Lost, and Potatoes May Follow**

**By JULIA MOSKIN, New York Times**

RIPE local tomatoes, keenly anticipated by growers and cooks, will be missing from many markets, farm stands and farm shares this summer.

Although there are no official estimates yet on crop loss, a severe outbreak of late blight fungus in tomatoes, first noted in June, is sweeping through farms and gardens in the Northeast.

John Mishanec, an educator with the integrated pest management program at Cornell University, compared the highly contagious and incurable disease to a "nuclear explosion" in the region's tomato crop. "And unless the weather changes, it's going to get worse," he said.

Consumers, he and others said, must be prepared to pay high prices to support local agriculture this summer.

Organic farmers, who have only a few approved weapons in their arsenal of pesticides, are absorbing much of the damage. Other farmers, whose tomatoes are already coming in late and stunted because of cool, wet weather, are waiting to see if pesticides, sunshine and luck will cooperate to prevent the infection from reaching their fruit.

The Hudson Valley region of New York, where the disease has jumped from tomatoes to potatoes and is wreaking havoc in both, has already experienced widespread crop loss. "I've never seen anything like this," said Amy Hepworth, a seventh-generation farmer who is raising 20 acres of organic tomatoes in Ulster County, N.Y., for customers that include Whole Foods and the Park Slope Food Co-op. On July 25, she was burning affected plants to try to prevent the fungus's spores from spreading farther into her fields.

Keith Stewart, a farmer in Orange County, N.Y., who has lost much of his tomato and potato crop, estimates his loss so far at \$40,000. Jay and Polly Armour, who grow about 40 different kinds of tomatoes at Four Winds Farm in Gardiner, N.Y., say that at least half their crop is gone. They sprayed their tomatoes for the first time in 20 years of organic farming, but the disease had already taken hold. "The fruit is rotting under the spray," Mr. Armour said.

Farmers and pathologists said that the fungicides available to organic farmers, mostly copper-based sprays used since the 19th century, are only intermittently effective.

Many farmers say that tomatoes are their most important cash crop and that the blight will be devastating. "Tomatoes get me out of debt every year," said Kira Kinney, an owner of Evolutionary Organics in New Paltz, N.Y., who has late blight on potatoes and tomatoes and expects that most of the crop will be destroyed. "I go into the season with credit card debt and I come out O.K.," she said. "That's how I cover my annual costs for the whole farm."

On July 23, William van Roestenberg said that 11 of the 12 growers who participate in the weekly farmers' market he runs in New Paltz had already seen late blight in their fields that was likely to ruin their crops. The next day, the 12th farmer — Mr. van Roestenberg himself — found the disease on his own tomatoes.

Late blight, which caused the Irish potato famine in the mid-19th century, thrives in damp, windy weather. Its symptoms include white powdery spores, brown spots on leaves and open lesions, each of which can produce hundreds of thousands of infectious spores. Burning, spraying and deeply burying infected plants are options for farmers; home gardeners should pull plants out at the first sign of the disease. Rather than composting them, the plants should be sealed in plastic bags and thrown away.

Every state in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic has confirmed recent cases of late blight, which normally does not appear in the region until August, if at all. The source of the outbreak is being investigated by pathologists. Home gardens likely helped spread the infection: Lowe's, Home Depot, Kmart and Wal-Mart all sold tomato seedlings with late blight in their garden centers from April to June. All are offering refunds or credits to gardeners who must destroy their plants.

But there is no similar recourse for farmers. Even those who have not lost a crop to blight are suffering financially because of it. To ward off the infection, which has been sweeping through farms in her area, Ms. Hepworth has been spraying all her plants with a covering of fixed copper, an approved organic fungicide that creates a physical barrier preventing spores from reaching the plant. Because copper, unlike synthetic fungicides, washes off in heavy rain and must be carefully reapplied, "It costs me \$1,000 every time it rains," she said.

Dale Mohler, an agricultural meteorologist at AccuWeather.com, said that low temperatures in June and July broke records across the Northeast and that rainfall is running 50 to 100 percent higher than normal around the region. Mr. Mohler, who said he lost his own home-grown tomato plants to late blight, said August isn't likely to bring the sustained hot weather — about 10 days with temperatures above 85 and dry conditions at night — that could stop the continued spread of late blight.

Like other growers, David Hambleton, a farmer in Dutchess County, N.Y., whose crop is shared by about 250 members of the Sisters Hill Farm community supported agriculture program, is concerned that members who do not receive the vine-ripe juicy summer tomatoes they look forward to will not pay \$500 to \$700 for a share next year. "Last year was a bumper crop, one of the best ever," he said. "This year, we'll have to ask our members to participate in local agriculture in a more realistic way."

Farmers who do not practice organics, like Bill Maxwell of Changewater, N.J., are using pesticide sprays to protect their tomatoes, but still must worry about blight, weather and the state of the crop, which is running about a month late. "I have huge, beautiful cauliflowers, but I'm not going to make a lot of money on that in July," he said. "People want their tomatoes."



## Crop Rotation for the Vegetable Garden

To get the best from your vegetable garden, you should practice a crop rotation management system. This entails only growing the same kind of crop in the same position one year in four. By moving plant groups each year, the soil doesn't get depleted of particular nutrients as different types of vegetables use different ones from the soil. Nutrient deficiencies cause plant stress which in turn makes a plant more susceptible to disease.

Divide your vegetable garden into four sections. The next year move the same plant group into the next section as shown in the diagram. That way each group will go back into its original section every four years

### FIRST YEAR

BED 1	BED 2	BED 3	BED 4
BEANS CELERY CORN EGGPLANT ONIONS PEAS PEPPERS SQUASH TOMATOES	BROCCOLI BRUSSELL SPROUTS CABBAGE CAULFLOWER LETTUCE SWEET BASIL	BEETS CARROTS POTATOES RADISHES TURNIPS	PLANT A COVER CROP.  SPREAD/TILL IN COMPOST OR "GREEN MANURE".

### SECOND YEAR

BED 1	BED 2	BED 3	BED 4
PLANT A COVER CROP.  SPREAD/TILL IN COMPOST OR "GREEN MANURE".	BEANS CELERY CORN EGGPLANT ONIONS PEAS PEPPERS SQUASH TOMATOES	BROCCOLI BRUSSELS SPROUTS CABBAGE CAULFLOWER LETTUCE SWEET BASIL	BEETS CARROTS POTATOES RADISHES TURNIPS

*Helping You Put Knowledge to Work*

### THIRD YEAR

<b>BED 1</b>	<b>BED 2</b>	<b>BED 3</b>	<b>BED 4</b>
BEETS CARROTS POTATOES RADISHES TURNIPS	PLANT A COVER CROP.  SPREAD/TILL IN COMPOST OR “GREEN MANURE”.	BEANS CELERY CORN EGGPLANT ONIONS PEAS PEPPERS SQUASH TOMATOES	BROCCOLI BRUSSELS SPROUTS CABBAGE CAULFLOWER LETTUCE SWEET BASIL

### FOURTH YEAR

<b>BED 1</b>	<b>BED 2</b>	<b>BED 3</b>	<b>BED 4</b>
BROCCOLI BRUSSELS SPROUTS CABBAGE CAULFLOWER LETTUCE SWEET BASIL	BEETS CARROTS POTATOES RADISHES TURNIPS	PLANT A COVER CROP.  SPREAD/TILL IN COMPOST OR “GREEN MANURE”.	BEANS CELERY CORN EGGPLANT ONIONS PEAS PEPPERS SQUASH TOMATOES

**Do not plant potatoes where tomatoes, peppers or eggplants were grown the previous year**

This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly, some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold, and/or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension Specialist or your regional DEC office. **READ THE LABEL BEFORE APPLYING ANY PESTICIDE.**

Updated 2009

Source: <http://www.yankeegardener.com/resource/croprotate.html>

# Vegetable Pest Status Report August 6, 2009

By John Mishanec, IPM Vegetable Program

## Potatoes

Late blight came into the region on tomatoes. It appears to be a tomato strain.

[http://vegetablemndonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Potato\\_LateBl1983.htm](http://vegetablemndonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Potato_LateBl1983.htm)

This means it is more aggressive on tomatoes than potatoes. Growers with LB on their tomatoes, with a good protective fungicide program on their potatoes were not showing late blight. Organic growers were not seeing the aggressive knock down of plants in their potatoes they were seeing in the tomatoes. As time passes, late blight has crept into the potatoes and could seriously endanger the crop.

Late blight on tomatoes is pretty apparent on both the plant and the fruit. When a spore lands on a leaf, it makes a large spot with lots of spores on the underside of the leaf. Those millions of spores then either spread to more leaves or land on the tomato fruit. That is why it spreads and kills the plants so quickly.

With potatoes, the tubers are under the ground. For a tuber to become infected, a spore needs to wash down cracks in the ground and attach itself to a tuber. Obviously, it is more difficult for a spore to come into contact with a tuber than an exposed tomato fruit. If you have late blight in your potato field, assess how wide spread and aggressive it is. With lots of spots on the plants, you will have lots of spores and more chance to infect tubers.

As the late blight gets worse in the potatoes, growers should assess if it might not be a good idea to kill the plants before late blight gets really bad in their fields. Most growers are digging some early potatoes now. With all the rain we have had, potatoes have generally sized up very well by now. Go out and assess the rest of your potatoes to see if you can get away with killing the tops on everything now. If you feel you have a yield you can live with, mow or kill off the tops of your potatoes to avoid more spores and more late blight infestation.

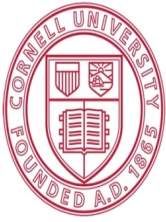
Late blight will not survive on dead tissue, therefore, if you kill or eliminate the tops, than when you dig the tubers, this will lessen the chance of tuber infection. If you are organic, either mow off the tops or allow them to be completely dead. You should wait at least two weeks with the tops completely dead for skin set before digging tubers.

Once you have dug your tubers, do not wash them before putting them into storage. With the cool, moist conditions of storage, any potato with late blight will turn to mush and bring all the other tubers around it down too. Store your tubers in as small batches as possible to lessen the chance of tuber infection spreading to the bigger storage population. Increase ventilation to help keep the humidity down in your storage area.

If you can, grade your potatoes well before selling them. Look for dark spots on the tuber. When you wash potatoes try to make sure they are dry before bagging. Wait a few days after bagging to make sure you do not have any break down.

According to Vern Grubinger, UVM, organic growers can use StoroX (Oxidate) or chlorine (must dilute to 4ppm before discharge) at labeled rates in wash water; another more effective option for suppressing late blight tuber rot appears to be Phostrol but it is labeled for russet-skinned varieties only.

Lastly, if you have more than one variety of potato, assess which varieties show the disease more. From my unscientific observations, Keuka Gold and Katadin show less disease than other varieties. Red Norland shows the most.



**Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Oneida County**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Email:** lsk23@cornell.edu

**For Release:**  
Immediate  
Aug 28, 2009

## **An ounce of Prevention is worth a pound of Cure!**

### **Lessons Learned from the Late Tomato/Potato Blight of 2009**

The widespread distribution of the Tomato Late Blight in 2009 initially started in a southern greenhouse. Infected tomato plants were unknowingly distributed to major retailers then sold to the public. Our cool wet summer provided the perfect conditions for this air borne disease to jump from homeowner to homeowner, farm to farm, and for the disease to jump from tomato to potato.

While we can not control every pest or disease, there are many lessons to be learned from this years lost tomato and potato crops. First and foremost is the importance of following the lead of the farmers.

**Sanitation -remove diseased plants – Early control -Next year’s Late Blight culprit may be this year’s potato crop. Potatoes infected with late blight left in fields or gardens could potentially infect neighboring gardens and fields in 2010.**

For Late Blight to overwinter it must have living tissue on which to survive. Any infected un-harvested potatoes that sprout next year, may infect our crops again next year. If you grew potatoes it is very important that you start with **disease free** seed and practice **crop rotation**. Plant a low growing crop where you planted potatoes in 2009. This will enable you to see then remove any potato plants sprouting from last years crop (don’t wait till you see signs of the disease). Contain air contaminating spores by double bagging suspected infected plants and dispose in the trash. Do not COMPOST!

**Practice crop rotation.** Don’t have the space...FIND IT! You don’t always have to plant tomatoes by the garage. Grow them in pots one year, plant beans by the garage. If you keep planting the same thing in the same place you not only deplete specific nutrients from the soil you are actually providing the host specific insects and diseases ideal living conditions. Some diseases do survive in the soil, Late Blight does not.

**Have soil tests done.** Find out what nutrients your soil needs. Some plant ailments are directly related to soil deficiencies. Healthy plants have a better chance of fighting off diseases or surviving insect attacks than plants that are stressed. (September is the ideal time to have a full nutrient analysis done call us for more information 736-3394.)

**Plant disease resistant varieties.** Hybridizing has created many good tasting disease resistant varieties of vegetables. Visit our website where you will find a publication of *Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners in New York State 2009*. Save the environment and yourself some time and money by planting these lower maintenance varieties.

While the Tomato Blight has devastated the tomato/potato crop for many homeowners and farmers we can be thankful that it is not going to cause the widespread famine and death of millions that is caused during the mid 1800's in the Irish potato fields. Today we are armed with an arsenal of scientific knowledge and technological media that makes valuable information widely available to all.

Have a gardening question? Our Master Gardener Volunteers are available Wednesday and Fridays from 9AM till Noon. 736-3394 or Visit the Home & Garden, Fact Sheet, section of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida Counties website for help on your home gardening needs [www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida/](http://www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida/)

### **Late Blight resistant tomatoes**

**Mountain Majic:** Flavor, uniformity and disease resistance in a high-sugar Campari-type. Mountain Magic produces round to deep round 2 oz. fruit on somewhat compact indeterminate plants. Fruits are flavorful, highly crack resistant and uniformly red inside and out, with a long shelf life. Resistant to Verticillium Wilt 1 and 2, and Fusarium Wilt 1 and 2, Mountain Magic also is moderately resistant to early blight, and highly resistant to late blight. Flavor stands up in taste comparisons with heirloom varieties. Get Heirloom quality with a modern disease package and yield. Good for either organic or conventional production.

cross between a medium and berry tomato bejo seed, limited quantity available : ie for trials: Jan-sales rep 805-689-1783

### **Plum regal**

Later-maturing hybrid freshmarket plum tomato offers a broad range of disease resistance, high yields of large fruit, and bright red exterior and interior. Resistant to Verticillium Wilt, Fusarium wilt 1 and 2, TSWV and late blight, with a moderate early blight resistance as well. Highly resistant to graywall and fruit cracking.

Fruits, similar in size and shape to Plum Crimson, are borne on determinate plants with heavy cover. Very small blossom end scars. Appealing deep red interior. Also suitable for vine-ripe or mature green harvest. Also available from Bejo seed Jan-sales rep 805-689-1783

### **Legend**

68 days. If late blight has been a problem in your garden, you should try growing Legend. Legend has shown strong tolerance of late blight fungus US8 and US11. So even in the most virulent areas, gardeners have a great chance of harvesting ripe tomatoes. Legend not only demonstrates tolerance of late blight, but is also the earliest maturing slicing tomato we know of. Legend produces amazingly sweet tomatoes, with just the right amount of acid flavor. The big 4-5 inch parthenocarpic fruit are glossy red, with a uniform round shape. Please keep in mind that being tolerant of blight is just that: tolerant-not immune. Bred and released by Dr. Jim Baggett at Oregon State University. Determinate. Territorial seed company 800-626-0866. Victory seed company: 503-829-3126

# TOMATO/POTATO Late Blight 2010!

Left over Potatoes may be the infecting agents in 2010.

- Remove all potatoes from the soil
- Do not allow any potatoes to germinate from last years crop
- If they do, remove/destroy by bagging and sending to the landfill.
- Be sure to use disease free seed
- Plant disease resistant varieties
- **DO NOT COMPOST**

## DID YOU KNOW?

- That if your pH is off plants cant absorb nutrients. (HAVE YOUR SOIL TESTED)
- Failing to rotate crops causes soil nutrient deficiencies.
- Plants that are stressed are more susceptible to insects & diseases.



**CORNELL  
COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION OF  
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**LOOK FOR 2010 CORNELL  
RECOMMENDS  
VEGETABLE VARIETIES  
FOR NY STATE  
ON OUR WEBSITE**

[www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida](http://www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida)

Have more questions about Tomato and Potato diseases?

Ask John J. Mishanec, **Vegetable IPM Extension Area Educator** on June 26, 2010 at the Herb & Flower Festival.



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**John J. Mis-  
John J. Mi**

Vegetable IPM Extension Area Educator (since 1990)

90 S Vegetable IPM Extension Area Educator (since 1990)

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## PRESS RELEASE

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**Press Contact:** Lynette S Kay  
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**For Release:**  
Immediate  
February 3, 2010

Time to Start Planning your Vegetable Gardens for 2010

Christmas is barely over and gardeners are starting to plan next year's crop. Of course the TV commercials advertising tillers instead of snow blowers and the seed catalogs replacing Christmas cards only adds fuel to the frustrated gardener's fire.

While the equipment can be a back saver, selecting the correct seeds should be what you are concentrating on this time of year. So sit back with a hot cup of coffee and start planning that perfect garden.

Gardeners are true optimists, for in the gardeners' mind next year will always be a better year. Making some sound choices now will get you closer to your dreams.

Last year tomato and potato crops were devastated by Late Blight. The good news is that the disease **can not** live in the soil. The bad news is that it can overwinter on infected potatoes that were left in the ground or saved for seed. Think you are safe because you didn't grow potatoes? Think again, this disease is air borne. One infected plant can infect within several miles. So if the guy around the corner has infected potatoes we may be in for another tomatoless year.

So what can you do? First, choose plant varieties that are disease resistant. The publication **Cornell Recommend Vegetable Varieties for 2010** is available for download off our website. Second, get your soil tested. While we cannot test for diseases in the soil we can tell you what nutrients are lacking. Plants are more susceptible to infection or insect attack when they are stressed. Third, rotate your crops. While Late Blight doesn't live in the soil, Early Blight and a plethora of other diseases or insects do. Rotating your crops is a simple way to outsmart these pests.

There are three disease resistant varieties of tomato that Cornell recommends (MOUNTAIN MAGIC, PLUM REGAL and LEGEND). Finding seed may be tricky as most of the Northeast was consumed by the disease. (Try Burpee, Johnny's and Totally Tomato seed companies)

You may have better luck buying plants in the spring. Try these local vendors for disease resistant varieties:

Heywood Greenhouses, Remsen 831-8096  
Mercantile Greenhouse, Richfield Springs 858-2703  
Benson Farms, Whitesboro 368-5040  
Sirko's, Greenhouses, Leonardsville 855-7575  
Brick House Acres, Litchfield 737-5635  
Olneys Flower Pot, Rome 339-6000  
River Road Greenhouses, Marcy 368-4497  
Candellas Greenhouses, Marcy 736-7675 or 736-8782



**Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Oneida County**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Press Contact:** Lynette S Kay  
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**Email:** lsk23@cornell.edu

**For Release:**  
Immediate  
April 28, 2010

Over the past few days Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County Horticulture Hotline has received several amusing and horrifying calls concerning the Late Blight on tomato and potato. It seems some snake oil salesman has been spreading rumors that you need to replace all your garden soil, smother it with gallons of caustic chemicals and disinfect your tomato cages with bleach!

Nothing could be further from the truth!

Here are the key facts to keep in mind:

- Unlike Early Blight, Late Blight does not survive in the soil or on other objects.
- Late Blight needs living tissue on which to survive.
- Late Blight is a highly contagious air borne disease.

Last year we had the perfect cool & damp weather conditions that allowed this disease to spread like wildfire (refer to fact #3).

Here is the problem.... In 2009, the disease started on tomatoes but by the end of the growing season it had also spread to potatoes. And, as every potato grower knows, you never seem to dig up every little spud. Those un-harvested infected potatoes will provide the living tissue the disease needs to survive (refer to Fact #2). If you allow that little infected spud to sprout, we have another cool damp growing season, and those little spores travel through the air, we may suffer another year without Tomato/Potato.

So Attention All Potato Growers, the control of this disease starts with you!

- Do not plant potatoes in the same place this year.
- Instead plant a low growing crop that will allow you to easily see and remove any of last year's spuds that sprout. (refer to Fact #2)
- To prevent further contamination, dispose of unwanted plants by bagging and sending to the landfill. Do not burn or compost (refer to Fact #3)

Use only certified disease free seed or tubers. (refer to Fact # 2)

Think your safe because you didn't or don't grow Potatoes? Think again! Remember Fact # 3- Late Blight is a highly contagious air borne disease. One infected plant can infect plants within several MILES.

So what is the homeowner to do?

Whatever vegetable crop you choose to grow, you should be following these basic gardening techniques.

- Don't replace your garden soil, amend it! Add compost and manure.
- Don't waste time and money smothering it with unnecessary chemicals. Instead, every few years, have a complete soil analysis done. Let us tell you exactly what nutrients to add for the crop you are growing.
- Rotate your crops. Don't plant the same plant family in the same place year after year.
- Purchase certified disease resistant seeds/ tubers (potato) or disease resistant varieties of plants.

While disinfecting tools is warranted for some diseases, when it comes to Late Blight you can save the bleach for the laundry. (refer to Fact # 1)

Want more information about Soil Testing, the Blight or other plant diseases, planting plans for crop rotation or a list or suggested vegetable varieties for NY State? Look at the Home and Garden Fact Sheets on Cornell Cooperative Extensions website at [www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida/](http://www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida/) or call the Horticulture Hotline, Wednesday and Fridays from 9AM –Noon. 736-3394.