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Tomato: Curly top (Beet curly top virus)

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful plant problem management.

Biology

Curly top is caused by a virus transmitted by the beet leafhopper. Many crops are affected, including tomato, bean, squash, beet, spinach, cucumber, and pepper. Typical symptoms of the disease include puckering and upward rolling and twisting of leaves, followed by a general yellowing of the plant. Young plants may be killed. Older plants are yellowed and dwarfed, with stunted growing tips. Leaves are thickened and brittle or leathery in texture. Leaf veins may be purplish. The virus is also found in annual flowers and weeds. Curly top is becoming increasingly common in western Washington.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Plant resistant varieties such as 'Columbian', 'Rowpac', 'Roza', and 'Saladmaster', among others. Availability may be limited.
- ~ Since leafhoppers avoid feeding on shaded plants, shading tomatoes (particularly when young) may help prevent infection. Pull out and destroy infected plants.
- ~ Control of leafhoppers is not effective for preventing disease.
- ~ Do not plant tomatoes near spinach or beets, which can serve as hosts for both leafhoppers and the virus.

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides

None recommended

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Images



*~ Caption: Curly top virus symptoms on tomato
~ Photo by: R.S. Byther*