

Tomato leaf issues

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I am still getting calls on tomatoes, lots and lots of calls on tomatoes. We are still seeing a lot of leaf spots on lower leaves. While early blight is a possibility, most of it is honestly our old friend septoria leaf spot. Regardless, do the cultural things that helps keep the leaves dry. Water at the base of plants, ground level, not with a sprinkler. When you plant, keep the tomatoes well spaced apart - three feet is probably preferred, four feet is ideal. Then stake the tomatoes up. Then you just have to figure on using fungicides. Spray weekly making sure you get good coverage of both upper and lower leaf surfaces. Chlorothalonil is probably the best choice and the product most readily found. You can treat and harvest the same day. Mancozeb is also a very good product but a little harder to find. It does have a five day waiting period. Harvest any tomatoes showing mature color before you spray. If you can find both products, alternate back and forth between them. What I've been getting more calls about lately though is not a disease problem at all but herbicide drift. This shows up as primarily upper leaves curling and showing distorted growth. Hot weather can make the leaves curl up along the midrib, but they aren't distorted. The herbicide drift comes from people using a dandelion type of weed killer that contains 2,4-D. The vapors from these products drift readily especially with temperatures above 80 degrees. Be careful when you are using these broadleaf weed killers during the gardening season as you can really mess up the tomato plants. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Squash Bugs

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I have not had one single call on squash bugs yet. Part of that may be because many people are just now getting their squash planted. Also, many species in the insect order that includes squash bugs, don't do well in wet weather. They are susceptible to several fungal and bacterial diseases that crank up in wet weather. But fear not, warmer and drier weather is surely on its way and with it will come an explosion of squash bugs. Squash bugs are the grey shield shaped bugs that feed on squash and pumpkins. The first generation is getting active now. There aren't a lot of them and that's what can be deceiving. You are only seeing a few squash bugs and you don't think anything about them and you don't treat. But then they mature and the mature insects lay eggs and then you have a real problem. Squash bugs, like box elder bugs and chinch bugs, had a hard outer shell as an adult insect. This outer shell is hard for insecticides to penetrate. Immature insects haven't yet developed that super hard shell and are fairly easily controlled so you have to start treating early. The other key factor in good control is getting the insecticide directly on them. They have a piercing sucking mouthpart so they aren't going to ingest the spray applied to the leaf surface. So that means you have to spray up under the leaves which is where they are often hiding during the daytime. Permethrin is going to be effective and readily available in many garden insect control products. But good old malathion and methoxychlor, if you can find them, will also work quite effectively on squash bugs. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

Otte.

Borer Control in Peaches

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Borers are insects that, well, bore into plants. Some turn into beetles as adults, some turn into moths, amazingly. Peach tree borer is a moth whose larvae attack peach trees. Once the larvae is into the trunk there isn't much that we can do. The eggs are laid at the base of the tree trunk. The young larvae hatch and burrow into the tree and spend time eating their way through the important conductive tissues just under the surface of the bark. If the damage is severe enough, the tree is essentially girdled on the inside and dies. The evidence of borers can often be seen as large secretions of dry or drying sap on the trunk. Late in the season these can harden and look like pieces of amber. Young trees are more likely to be attacked than older trees and healthy vigorously growing trees are less likely to be attacked. To deal with peach tree borers, we first try to keep the trees healthy and vigorously growing through annual pruning, fertilization and regular watering when it is dry. But then follow that up with insecticide treatments also. Permethrin is the product of choice and is used by thoroughly soaking the bottom portions of the tree to the point that the spray is starting to pool at the base of the plant. Do this all the way around the trunk and up a foot or two on the tree. Then when the newly hatched larvae starts to burrow into the tree it eats the insecticide and dies before it can do any damage. There's a couple of generations per year of this pest so plan to treat the last week of June and then treat again the last week in July. Remember that it is very important to treat young trees. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420

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