

Early Blight a Common Garden Problem



In spite of its name, Early Blight can occur in gardens any time during the growing season. The disease commonly affects plants in the ***Solanaceae*** family including tomatoes, eggplants, peppers and potatoes. Early Blight is a fungus disease that overwinters in the soil and in plant debris in the garden. When it rains, the spores of the disease are splashed up to the lower leaves of a plant where they develop in about 10 days into the characteristic disease shown in the illustration. Leaves develop distinct "ringed" spots which are surrounded by yellowing. Eventually the leaves fall from the plant. After fruit sets, the developing vegetables become susceptible to sun scald, further damaging the crop.

Disease lesions on the stems and fruit appear as sunken dark spots, and can further damage the fruit as it develops. Plants that are vigorous before the development of the disease tend to be able to resist the effects of Early Blight better than weak, underperforming plants.

There are several products which can control the development of Early Blight in the home garden. A contact fungicide containing chlorothalonil such as **Bonide Fung-Onil** applied to plants can stop the spread of the disease after it starts. Fung-Onil is available as an economical concentrate for large areas, or as a pre-mixed ready-to use formulation for spot treatment.

Fungicides containing manganese are also effective in controlling Early Blight in plants. **Bonide Mancozeb** fungicide is one such product, and is commonly recommended by universities and co-operative extension offices for the control of Early Blight.

Gardeners who are looking for natural controls for Early Blight can use one of several copper based fungicides from Bonide. **Bonide Copper Fungicide Dust**, and **Copper Fungicide Liquid** in both concentrate and ready to use formulations are approved for organic gardening by the USDA.

When applying chemical controls for blight on edible crops, be sure to follow the label directions including frequency of application and time to harvest recommendations.

- Comes from spores in the soil and in left over debris from previous year
- Can occur any time during the growing season
- Causes leaves to fall off plant making fruit susceptible to sunscald
- *Can also affect potato, eggplant and peppers in the garden*
- Can start early, but greatest damage is done after fruit set
- Resistant plant varieties are limited but are available
- Good garden maintenance including removal of previous year debris also helps eliminate the disease

Bonide Control Products for Early Blight



Fung-Onil Products

- Contains chlorothalonil
- Fast acting to control common diseases
- Works on contact
- Use on vegetables
- RTU or Concentrate



Mancozeb Flowable

- Contains zinc and manganese
- Broad spectrum disease control
- 2-5 tsp. per gallon
- OK for vegetables



Copper Fungicides

- Liquids – Copper Octanoate
- Dust – Copper Sulfate
- Approved for organic gardening
- Use for vegetables and fruit
- Controls blights and more!