

## Mulching to Manage Bacterial Leaf spot in the Home Garden

### Recognize the problem

Bacterial Leaf spot is a serious problem in hot peppers. Light brown spots are seen on leaves of affected plants. If not controlled, the plant dies. Once the disease enters the field, it is hard to control and the disease is worse in heavy rainfall accompanied by winds.

### Background

The pathogen lives in volunteer plants, weeds and, for a short time, in the soil. Pesticides are effective but expensive. With the use of mulches, the disease can be reduced in an economic and environmentally friendly way. Mulch is any type of material that is spread or laid over the surface of the soil as a covering. This includes newspaper, grass cuttings and dried leaves or similar material. The mulch can control volunteer plants and weeds, which will reduce disease spread by this method.

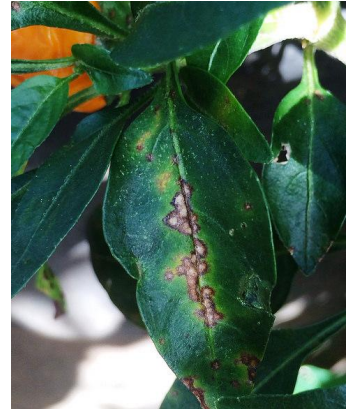
### Management

Some mulches are available in and around your home such as raked leaves, grass cuttings and newspapers.

- Spread a layer of 4-8 sheets of newspaper around the plants
- Moisten the sheets to keep them in place. On windy days it is easier to moisten the sheets before you place them down
- Cover the newspaper with a 3-4 inch layer of organic mulch (grass cuttings) which will give protection throughout the growing season
- If using grass cuttings, only cover the soil with a 4–6 inch layer of cuttings after transplanting. The organic mulch will also control weeds and add nutrients to the soil.

The use of pathogen-free seed and transplants is recommended.

Leaf spots on leaf. (Photo by Scot Nelson (CC BY))



Scientific name(s) > *Xanthomonas campestris pv. vesicatoria*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Trinidad and Tobago



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