

Reducing tomato bacterial wilt in your field

Recognize the problem

Tomato is one of the most important fruits in the world. Unfortunately, it is affected by a virulent disease: bacterial wilt. This bacteria reduces plant yields and eventually kills the plant. It causes the stem to soften and leaves to wilt and fall. We also see black or brown spots on and inside the stem. The plant dies when the disease is at an advanced stage.

Background

This disease is caused by a bacteria that lives near the surface of the fruit. It arrives in the field by wind or rain and can be transmitted by infected seeds or seedlings.

The disease can be transferred from one plant to another through water splash during the rainy season, or by unclean agricultural tools.

When a plant is infected, it is important to remove it straight away in order to reduce the inevitable spread. This cultural method is extremely useful and should be done for many diseases in the field.

Management

- Monitor the field once a week. This will allow for early detection and removal from the field. Farmers should ask their tomato-growing neighbours to be vigilant and act as soon as one infected plant is seen.
- Remove the whole plant (including the roots) and place it in a large plastic bag. Remove from the field and burn the plant.
- To avoid rainsplash in the field, place fabricated mulch at the base of the plant, especially if you notice rainsplash in one part of your field.
- Remember to clean agricultural tools after using them in the field with ethanol, or place them over a hot flame for 10 to 15 seconds, to destroy the disease.

If we look inside the stem, we can see some back brown patches near the collar. (Photo by Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series)



The disease causes a general wilt and drooping of the plant. (Photo by Phil Taylor)



Scientific name(s) > *Ralstonia solanacearum*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Democratic Republic of the Congo

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