

## Disposal of the Infected Crop

Unfortunately, by the time you detect an infection it's already too late to save your crop. It is extremely important to properly dispose of the infected plants to prevent further infection of your own crop or your neighbors.

**DO** Cut the stem of the plant at soil level, dispose in a garbage bag and tie the top. This will enable you to avoid spreading spores in the air.

**DO** Dispose of bags containing infected plants in the Black Bin.

**DON'T** Pull the plant out of the ground; it can dislodge spores into the air where they can become wind borne and spread to neighboring plants.

**DON'T** Dispose of infected plants in the Green Bin. Late Blight spores, if not composted properly, can remain viable.

Late Blight on home garden potatoes and tomatoes transfers easily to neighbors' gardens through wind, and rain. The disease can easily spread to large commercial crops.

Know the signs and proper disposal techniques.

Save this brochure to help identify Late Blight in your garden and who to contact for more information.

If you suspect blight in your garden, but are unsure, contact the PEI Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

### Contact Information:

The PEI Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Agriculture Information Desk

1-866-PEIFarm (734-3276)

1-902-368-4145

or

[peiextension@gov.pe.ca](mailto:peiextension@gov.pe.ca)

11 Kent Street  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor Jones Building  
Charlottetown, PE

### Thanks to

Agriculture and Agri Food Canada  
for the photos

# Protect Your Crop from Late Blight

Identify the Signs  
of Late Blight on  
Potatoes and Tomatoes



14AG06-39857



Agriculture and  
Forestry

## Identify the Signs of Late Blight

The development and spread of Late Blight can be extremely rapid if given favorable weather conditions. These conditions include high relative humidity, temperatures between 12° and 24° C and wet leaves.



Dark, water soaked lesions (spots) form on the leaves. The lesions are not contained within the veins of the leaf.



Spore production that appears as fluffy white growth on the edges of lesion may occur on the underside of the infected plant.



Black lesions of Late Blight can be found on healthy new growth and on the stem of the plant.

## What is Late Blight?

Late Blight was responsible for the Irish Potato Famine in the 1840s, which resulted in the death and mass emigration of millions of people. The fungus like *Phytophthora infestans* which causes Late Blight, belongs to a group of organisms called “water molds”. Late Blight thrives and produces spores under a humid, moist environment and causes infection only when free water is present on plants. The pathogen is highly aggressive and can potentially infect all plant

parts, causing rapid die back and death. Tomato plants can be the source and carrier of Late Blight. It will attack and destroy both crops equally. Late Blight spores can travel by wind, water or contact therefore the disease can spread very quickly. Late Blight spores can survive between crops and over winter on infected seed potatoes, cull potato piles and volunteer potatoes.

## How to Prevent Late Blight

Plant potato seed certified by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and free from any disease. Certified seed can be purchased from many garden supply centers or from local potato seed growers. Plant healthy tomato plantlets or better yet Late Blight resistant varieties of tomatoes. Water the soil underneath the plants and not the foliage. Planting your potatoes and tomatoes in a warm, dry, sunny area will promote strong plant growth and reduce the chance of late blight infection.

Don't plant potatoes saved from last year's garden or ones sold at the supermarket for eating. Try and plant potatoes, tomatoes, bell pepper and eggplants in different areas of the garden as they all can be affected by Late Blight. Avoid over watering and avoid wetting the foliage if possible. Plant your potatoes and tomatoes in well drained areas with maximum air flow.