December 22, 1998

Cooler drier air that moved into the region behind last week’s cold front seems to have had the welcome effect of substantially reducing the incidence of diseases and insects across the reporting area.

Leaf miner numbers are up significantly across the area. Leaf miner has been reported widely in potato and tomato, and to a lesser extent in pepper and cucurbits. Leaf miners are also being reported in new watermelon plantings. Little economic damage is being reported except in a few instances were growers were caught unawares and populations reached high levels. Leaf miners should be active for the next few months.

Worms have practically vanished from the local scene. We have had isolated reports of a resurgence of fall armyworm in the vicinity of old pepper fields. In these cases, moths were reported in traps with little or no damage to the new crop.

Broad mite numbers are down but there are still widely scattered reports of broad mites affecting pepper. Incidence is localized but control continues to give some growers trouble. Crop damage is light to moderate.

Bacterial spot activity continues to decline across the area. Incidence is still wide spread in pepper and tomato but new infections are down and crop damage light to moderate in most cases. There have been isolated reports of some increased bacterial spot activity at lower canopy levels on plants, which are slow to dry out in the mornings.

Early Blight/Alternaria and target spot are widely present at low levels on tomato. Incidence is spotty and damage is generally low. These diseases are found primarily on older crops where foliage is dense and harvesting has damaged plants and help spread the pathogens. The occurrence of morning fog and heavy night dews has also favored the development of these diseases.

There have been no reports of pepper weevils from any respondents this reporting period.

Thrips are reportedly present on pepper and cucumbers in a few isolated locations throughout the area. Incidence and crop damage are at very low levels to date.

We have had one report of late blight on potato in the area. Heavy dews coupled with foggy morning conditions and warm temperatures may provide optimum conditions for the appearance of this disease.

Tomato yellow leaf curl virus continues to be reported from widely scattered sites across the area. Incidence is generally low and plants are being rogued-out upon identification. In one instance, however, disease incidence has reached significant levels, with approximately 10% of the field expressing symptoms at crop end. In this case, the virus seems to have spread from a few initial pockets of infection. With the fall crop coming to an end, the major concern is carry-over to the spring crop.
Higher than expected whitefly counts are being reported across the area on a number of crops. With the fairly high incidence of TYLCV being reported from the Homestead, Manatee/Ruskin and Gainesville areas and increasing reports of TYLCV in SW Florida, this may become a concern to local growers.

There have been scattered reports of minor wind damage, following the passage of last week’s cold front.

**Tomato yellow leaf curl virus - Update.** Tomato yellow leaf curl virus symptoms in tomato are evident about 2 weeks after infection. The first leaves infected are mottled and stunted and appear very similar to the symptoms of tomato mottle virus. Leaves that emerge after these are increasingly smaller and show a yellowing of the leaf margins and an upward cupping of the leaf. Symptoms become more pronounced which each leaf produced resulting in a growing point with very small chlorotic leaves that appear to glow with a yellow light. Symptoms are often not apparent on infected transplants. TYLCV can also infect beans causing stunting, leaf curling and mottling.

One study conducted in commercial fields indicated that marketable yields are reduced by 80% on plants that became infected within 8 weeks of transplanting and up to 60% in plants infected after 8 weeks. Research has indicated that whitefly adults can emerge already carrying and ready to transmit the virus. Whiteflies produced on tomato plants that are on the decline are morphologically different in that they are better able to fly long distances in search of a new host. Treatment of old crops with oil and an insecticide such as Thiodan to kill whiteflies before crop destruction is strongly recommended.

**Whitefly management** is important in controlling this disease. Admire in the greenhouse and transplant water will give early protection. For resistance management, it is important not to use Provado on plants where Admire was applied earlier in the season. There are new insect growth regulators (IGR’s) – such as Knack and Applaud, which interfere with whitefly development. These are rather slow acting and do not affect adults. IGR’s will not stop the spread of the virus but will help reduce secondary spread within a field. Effective coverage is critical in whitefly control. – Excerpted from Manatee Vegetable Newsletter.

**Hope you all have a Blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.**

**Contributors** include: Fred Heald/Farmers Supply, Alice McGhee/Thomas Produce, Leon Lucas/Glades Crop Care, Gene McAvoy/Hendry County Extension, Chuck Obern/C+B Farm, Doug Purvis/Terra, Dr. Pam Roberts/SWFREC, Wes Roan/6 L’s, Jay Shivler/ F+F Ranch, Kevin Seitzinger/Gargulio, Mike Stanford/Med Farms, Dr. Phil Stansly/SWFREC and Dr. Charlie Vavrina/SWFREC.

The **SW Florida Pest and Disease Hotline** is compiled by Gene McAvoy and will be issued on a biweekly basis by the Hendry County Cooperative Extension Office as a service to the vegetable industry.

**Gene McAvoy**
Extension Agent II
Vegetable/Ornamental Horticulture 941-674-4092 phone
Hendry County Extension Office 941-860-8811 mobile
PO Box 68 941-674-4097 fax
LaBelle, FL 33975 gmcavoy@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu