December, 9, 1998

**Bacterial spot** seems to be settling down after the flare-ups reported after last month’s heavy rains. The disease was quite severe in some pepper plantings resulting in heavy leaf drop. Plants in these fields appear to be growing out nicely with drier conditions prevailing. Spot is still widely reported in peppers and tomatoes. Infection incidence and crop damage levels range from light - moderate but is still severe in some cases. All races appear to be present depending on where samples are taken.

**Early Blight/Alternaria** is present at low levels on tomato. Incidence is spotty and damage is generally low, continued heavy morning fog and night dews many encourage the spread of Alternaria, which is often masked by the presence of bacterial spot lesions.

**Target spot** is on the increase in on cucumber and tomato. Target spot, especially on older crops where the vines are relatively thick and foliage dense, is quite severe in isolated fields.

**Broad mites** continue to be active on pepper due to continued warm dry weather. Distribution is wide spread but localized, with numbers and crop damage reaching moderate to high levels in some fields. Some easing of populations is reported. Broad mites are also being reported on eggplant and potato.

**Armyworm** populations are decreasing across the area. Incidence is spotty and damage levels are generally light in most fields. A shift in species from **beet armyworm** to **southern armyworm** has been observed. There have been isolated reports of loopers causing light to moderate damage on tomato. **Pinworms** have been reported in traps and light damage has been reported on plants in at least one instance.

**Leafminer** numbers are up dramatically across the area. Incidence and crop damage is highest in tomato and lower in pepper and potato. Pressure from this pest will most likely increase over the next couple months as we enter the cool season.

**Pepper weevils** have been seen in traps around the area but little crop damage has been reported overall. Light damage from **cucumber beetles** is being reported on pepper in some fields.

**Powdery mildew** is widely present on squash. Incidence and crop damage increase with the age of the field.

**Thrips** are present on pepper and cucumbers in scattered locations throughout the area. Incidence and crop damage is reportedly at low levels to date.

**Late blight** has not yet been reported 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** has now been reported in at least two widely scattered sites across the area. In one instance, the disease has been observed to be spreading from an obvious source of initial infection. Whitefly control and field sanitation is critical to preventing TYLC from becoming a problem in SW Florida. Recommendations include use of Imidacloprid (Admire/Provado) for whitefly control. If populations increase later in the crop, use of one of the IGR’s, such as Knack or Applaud may be advisable. In addition growers are urged to: (1) Destroy fall crops early, (2) Control whiteflies at time of crop destruction (addition of oil and insecticide like Thiodan to herbicide), (3) plant spring crops late, (4) locate spring crops away from old plantings, (5) use transplants from uninfected areas and (6) protect spring crops early from whiteflies.

**Whitefly** counts are reported to be up on some older stands of tomato. Unusually high whitefly counts have also been observed in pepper. With the fairly high incidence of TYLCV being reported from the Homestead, Manatee/Ruskin and Gainesville areas, this may become a concern to local growers.

**Gummy stem blight** is present in older stands of cantaloupe and watermelon. Isolated incidence of **mosaic** is being reported in watermelon. **Angular leaf spot** is being seen in some cucumber fields.

There have been a few reports of **little leaf** or **frenching** on tomato. This is **non-parasitic pathogenic disorder**. Symptoms include stunting and small strap-like leaves, which appear similar to virus or 2,4 D injury. Little leaf is attributed to microorganisms producing toxins that injure the plants. Wet poorly drained soils and high soil temperatures favor this condition.

Widespread reports of **poor post-harvest fruit quality** on a variety of commodities is being reported; it is suspected that this is a result of unfavorable weather conditions earlier in the season.

**Contributors** include: Bill Bethea/Circle M, Fred Heald/Farmers Supply, David Harloff/Pacific, Alice McGhee/Thomas Produce, Leon Lucas/Glades Crop Care, Gene McAvoy/Hendry County Extension, Chuck Obern/C+B Farm, Dr. Pam Roberts/SWFREC, Wes Roan/6 L’s, Jay Shivler/ F+F Ranch, 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