July 15, 1999

JUST A REMINDER

Most growers did a good job in cleaning-up crop debris at the end of the spring cropping season, however we are still seeing a few fields where old crops have been left intact. This is bad news, especially in light of tomato yellow leaf curl virus management but also for the control of a number of other pests and diseases. Whitefly populations can over-summer on a number of crops including cucurbits and will be present in high numbers to cause problems in fall crops. Adult pepper weevils are still being found in traps around the area. These can also survive over-summer in pepper that has not been destroyed after harvest.

Remember that field sanitation is one of the most important tactics in vegetable pest and disease management. The best thing that growers can do for themselves and their neighbors is to clean up crop residues promptly after harvest. A long as possible crop-free period over the summer will help ensure a good start for the fall crop.

Sanitation is an important IPM technique that should not be over looked as an effective, preventative tool against many vegetable pest and disease problems. Sanitation includes any practice that eradicates or reduces the amount of pathogen inoculum, pests, or weed seeds present and thus helps reduce or eliminate subsequent pest and disease problems.

The prompt destruction of a crop at the end of the season will immediately end the production of disease inoculum and insects and eliminate the spread of diseases and pests to any other host plants in the vicinity. Downy and powdery mildew on melons can spread via wind from older, diseased plants to plants in surrounding fields that are still maturing. These diseases are obligate parasites. This means that they can only grow and multiply on living host tissue. Some plant pathogens, such as the bacterium that causes bacterial spot of tomato and pepper, are unable to survive for extended periods of time outside of the host tissue. Plowing or disk ing under infected plant debris helps not only by covering up the inoculum but also speeds up the disintegration of plant tissue and kills the pathogen.

Prompt destruction of tomato vines will kill off white fly populations and eliminate transmission of the tomato yellow leaf curl virus to subsequent crops and also eliminate inoculum from late blight and other fungal diseases. This is particularly important in the case of TYLCV, as sanitation and whitefly control are the only tools currently available for the management of this disease.
Weeds and volunteers should also be removed to prevent the survival and over-summering of pathogens that can serve as inoculum reservoirs for the next crop. It is thought that pepper weevils can reproduce in some solanaceous weeds like nightshade. Techniques such as mowing off pepper should not be relied upon as this often results in re-sprouts which can harbor pests and disease problems over summer.

The use of cover crops and summer fallowing of fields are also effective tools in reducing weed populations that can cause problems in the subsequent crop. Field sanitation will be come an increasingly important tool to growers in face of the impending loss of methyl bromide – whose ease of use and effectiveness in controlling a wide range of problems allowed us to neglect some of these practical common sense pest management techniques.

Have you done a thorough clean up on your farm? Are any re-sprouts or volunteers emerging that might cause problems? Has your neighbor overlooked any areas? It might not be a bad idea to scout around and check things out.

Make sure your transplant producer is using Admire in the greenhouse to help ensure whitefly and TYLCV free transplants! Bayer recommends 0.5 oz per 5,000 plants 7 days before shipping. It is also recommended that you use Admire in the setting water at transplanting.


August 3, 1999  1:00 – 4:00 PM
Dade County Extension Office
18710 SW 288th Street
Homestead

August 4, 1999  9:00 – 11:30 AM
Mounts Agricultural Center
531 N Military Trail
West Palm Beach

August 5, 1999  9:00 – 11:30 AM
Collier County Agricultural Center
14700 Immokalee Road
Naples

August 10, 1999  9:00 – 11:30 AM
Manatee County Agricultural Center
1303 West 17th Street
Palmetto

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

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