

PEST ALERT

Volume 09, No. 01

June 26, 2009

Dear Grower,

This is the first issue of Potato Pest Alert for the 2009 growing season. Information will be published on a weekly basis and will also be posted at www.maineipotaim.com and www.umaine.edu/umext/potatoprogram. Information and updates will also be available by calling 1-888-USE-UMCE or 207-760-9IPM.

WARNING – Potato late blight has been found on tomato plants from several garden centers around the state. Potato growers should assume that late blight inoculum is present in the area. This dramatically elevates the risk of potato late blight. Please encourage all home gardeners and potato producers to be checking tomatoes and potatoes for late blight.

All potato growers should be actively scouting for potato late blight!

Sincerely,

James D. Dwyer
 Crops Specialist

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 Crops Specialist

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 Pest Mgmt. Specialist

Cutworms:

Variegated cutworms have been found in central Maine. Cutworms are not controlled by the neonicotinoid materials used at time of planting. Typically one will see a wilted plant or leaf cutoff, which will signal one to look in the soil at the base of the plant.

Regular Features

Aphids:

Minimal aphid activity has been noted in our water pan trapping system. Several non-potato colonizing aphids have been collected. One potato aphid was collected at one location in Aroostook. No aphids have been detected in potato fields as of this date.

Recommended Economic Thresholds

Seed: 10% of plants with aphids, or 1 winged Green peach aphid
 Processing/Tablestock: 50% of plants with aphids,
 or 1 winged Green peach aphid

Colorado Potato Beetle:

Adult Colorado potato beetles have been reported throughout our scouting range. Beetles are actively laying eggs, and we expect these eggs to be hatching soon.

Recommended Economic Threshold

Adults: 25/50 plants surveyed
 Large Larvae: 75/50 plants surveyed
 Small Larvae: 200/50 plants surveyed

European Corn Borer:

We have started to collect European corn borer moths in our pheromone trapping system. Moths have been collected throughout our trapping system. The highest number of moths collected so far has been 11 in a 7-day period. This is a long way from the 60 moths in a 7-day period threshold. No egg masses have been detected at this time.

Potato Flea Beetle:

Potato flea beetles have been found in the central Maine area. Many times these insects will have an “edge effect” as they move into a field. The economic threshold for potato flea beetles is when the terminal leaflets have an average of 15 shot holes. Many times potato flea beetles can be controlled by spot spraying. Neonicotinoid materials applied at time of planting should control these early potato flea beetles.

Recommended Economic Threshold

15 “shot holes” per terminal leaflet

Disease:

The finding of potato late blight on tomato plants at several garden centers in the state means that late blight inoculum is in the area. All potatoes should be protected at this time. We strongly urge all industry personnel to be actively scouting at this time.

Finding late blight early and destroying infected plants before the disease has had a chance to spread has proven to be an effective strategy.

If late blight is found, be sure to contact your neighbors so they can take the appropriate actions.

