

PEST ALERT

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Dear Grower,

The crop continues to grow rapidly and looks excellent. The “set” on many varieties also looks very good. Seed growers may want to be checking tuber size at this time in order to plan for vine desiccation of seed plots.

The break in the weather has certainly been a welcomed relief, however, even with the good weather we have had enough conducive conditions for our “No Blight” stations to continue to report a 5-day spray schedule. With the uncertain and changing weather forecast for next week, as well as the disease pressure, we would urge caution in relation to growers considering extending a fungicide schedule.

Rate, timing, and coverage are the key essentials for disease protection.

With all of the emphasis on potato late blight, we would like to remind seed growers that aphid activity is increasing, and growers should be scouting for aphid populations.

Sincerely,

James D. Dwyer
 Crops Specialist

Steven B. Johnson
 Crops Specialist

James F. Dill
 Pest Mgmt. Specialist

European Corn Borer:

Minimal moth activity was reported this week. A few larval entry sites have been noted in several fields throughout our scouting region. No locations approached an economic injury level.

Recommended Economic Threshold

60 moths trapped in a 7-day period
 1 egg mass found for every 15 plants surveyed

Regular Features

Aphids:

This week our scouts are finding a modest increase in aphid activity throughout our scouting range. Several winged Green peach aphids were collected from our water pan trapping system, and several winged Green peach aphids were also collected on our sticky card traps. Potato aphids are the principle species being found within fields and water pan traps. Buckthorn aphids are being found in water pan traps in Central Maine.

Several fields that were treated with a systemic material at the time of planting have small populations of wingless potato aphids, 4-6% levels. We strongly encourage all seed growers to be carefully scouting fields at this time.

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:

Beetle populations, as a general rule, for most fields are quite low, with a few exceptions. As growers scout for beetle activity and plan strategies, one should consider how much longer the crop needs to grow, prior to making a treatment. For some seed growers and some tablestock varieties, beetle suppression may not be necessary because of the timing of vine desiccation.

Recommended Economic Threshold

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

Disease:

Potato late blight is being found in many locations throughout the potato producing areas of the State of Maine. Most finds are small, with a few exceptions. We strongly encourage all growers to be carefully scouting for Potato late blight. If late blight is found, please contact your neighbors.

If late blight “hot spots” are to be taken out, please use caution. Small “hot spots” can be burned out with small propane weed burners or can be done chemically. Please read and follow all pesticide label instructions. Please pay particular attention to the personal protective equipment section of the label. If larger areas are to be removed mechanically, employ practices to reduce spore movement.

Our scouts are also beginning to find some “blackleg” in area fields. Blackleg will appear as a blackened portion of the stalk usually, but not always, low on the stalk. This is a bacterial disease and will smell badly. This can easily be mistaken for a late blight infected stalk. When in doubt, please bring samples to the Presque Isle Extension office or the Pest Management Office in Orono.

