

**PEST ALERT**

Volume 09, No. 08

August 14, 2009

Dear Grower,

The nice weather last week slowed the spread of late blight; however, this week potato late blight has continued to be discovered in new fields within the potato producing areas of the state. Most of the new finds are small and discovered before the period of rapid infield expansion. Finding these infections early will allow these growers to, hopefully, prevent further expansion of the infection.

We strongly urge all growers to call the hotline for the latest disease updates (1-888-USE-UMCE or 207-760-9IPM).

As growers begin planning for harvest and implementing vine desiccation, we recommend a conservative approach. With the severe threat of disease, it will be imperative to have complete vine kill and good skin set to minimize tuber damage and the potential for disease infection. We also encourage growers to avoid “wet” areas in fields. The potential for bringing disease into storage is not worth the risk.

With many colleges starting soon, we will be losing some of our IPM staff; therefore, next week will be our last week for regular scouting. I want to thank all of our IPM team members for a fine job. We also want to thank all of our IPM cooperators. This program would not be possible without the support of the Maine Potato Board, USDA, and our Congressional delegation.

This will be the last regular issue of Pest Alert for the 2009 growing season. If necessary, special notices will be sent; and the hotline and website will continue to be updated.

Have a safe harvest!

Sincerely,

James D. Dwyer  
 Crops Specialist

Steven B. Johnson  
 Crops Specialist

James F. Dill  
 Pest Mgmt. Specialist

**Regular Features**

**Aphids:**

We have noted an increase in aphid activity in our water pan and sticky card system. We are finding some potato and Green peach aphids in these traps. Our scouts are also noting some aphid activity in fields. Most of the infield aphids being found are potato aphids—both winged and wingless. Seed growers should also be aware that as clover and grain crops mature and are cut, the aphids on these crops are displaced and will be looking for alternate host plants. This is an important time to be field scouting. Also, please remember—as long as green plant material is visible, the plants are susceptible to virus transmission.

**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:**

This week our scouts have noted spotty Colorado potato beetle activity. They have found mostly small and large larvae. Most beetle activity has been on the ends of rows or edges of fields. In some fields, the larvae have entered the soil in order to pupate; and we should see another flush of adults shortly. Prior to controlling late season beetles, please ascertain whether or not it is economically viable to control these insects. Also, please be aware that observations have indicated that the fungicide triphenyltin hydroxide (“Tin”) will suppress beetle feeding. Controlling late season beetles to try to reduce the overwintering, populations only contribute to the increase of resistance.

**Recommended Economic Threshold**

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

**Disease:**

All stations are still reporting a 5-day fungicide schedule. With the disease pressure in the area and the uncertain extended weather forecast, we strongly encourage growers to be extremely conservative with their disease control strategy.

With late blight in the area, we encourage growers to consider vine desiccation as soon as a marketable crop is available. This will help to minimize the risk of tuber infection. As you plan for harvest, please include time for the vines to be completely dead. This is not a year to take chances trying to store tubers that have not had a good skin set. The risk outweighs any potential benefit.

**Harvest Safety:**

As we begin to plan for harvest, please take time to train your harvest employees. Many harvest employees are not used to working near equipment, and that training time may prevent a serious injury.

