

# Tomatoes - Organic Late Blight Prevention

## A Garden Guide

Late Blight is caused by the pathogen *Phytophthora infestans*. It is an oomycete or “water mold”. The spores spread by wind and water. It is difficult to eradicate and spreads rapidly in cool, wet weather.

Tomatoes and Potatoes are the main victims; Eggplant and Petunias can be carriers.



- **Inspect plants frequently**

- Plant in fertile, well-draining soil. Organic composts and fertilizers will feed the life in the soil, that life will then nourish your plants. Healthy plants are more resilient to pests and diseases.



- **Staking and pruning** plants promotes air movement. Maintain good airflow.

- **Water early morning**, since plants are already wet from dew.

- **Water at ground level** - avoiding ALL foliage/plant parts. Avoid overhead irrigation.

- **Mulch** – Helps prevent the pathogen from bouncing up from the soil on to the plants

- **Sanitation is key.** Don't touch healthy plant parts with “blighty” fingers, hands, arms, or tools. Keep hands, tools, & harvest buckets clean.

- **Do not work plants when wet.**

- **Keep the garden area weed-free.** Weeds can hold moisture and spread disease.

- **Plan to spray once every 7 days, starting at planting time.** Week 1: Copper Week 2: Spray with Monterey Complete Organic Disease Control (Bacillus subtilis var. amyloliquefaciens) Week 3: Spray with Copper. Repeat cycle until frost. Follow all directions. **ALL** plant surfaces must be covered, with special attention to the underside of leaves.

- **Remove and destroy “blighty” leaves.** They can be burned, but do not add “blighty” leaves in your compost pile unless it is at least 120 F.

- As a stop-gap measure, some people immediately destroy the first plant they notice blight attacking.

- **Store diseased tomatoes separately** from uncontaminated fruit.

- If all else fails, **plant disease-resistant varieties.**

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