



## TOMATO INFO

### *Hail Damage on Seedlings*

#### **HAIL DAMAGED TOMATO SEEDLINGS**

On Easter Sunday afternoon, parts of Woodland had a thunderstorm pass through along with areas of hail. The following is a quick note.

Clearly the severity of crop damage would depend on the duration of the hail event and the size and strength of the hailstones. I am guessing that in most cases, tomato stands were not completely lost.

However, damage is highly likely. The physical damage caused as leaf tissue is shredded and stems are wounded is a set back. My limited experience indicates that damaged plants with loss of foliage and injured branches may be delayed in maturity. The recovery is likely faster and with less yield loss when plants are less mature and have not progressed into the early flower and fruit setting stages. Younger plants are likely more prone to stand loss, but can recover faster than much older plants.

For the older plants that are far beyond the layby stage with open flowers and early fruit sets, when damage is high, the result has been a clear delay in recovery which results in delayed harvest from the expected schedule plus a reduction in yield. If stand loss also occurs, the lower plant population contributes further to a less concentrated fruit set, and thus adds to the later maturity.

Beware of infections from bacterial speck. For all growers, the other important message is: if rainy, wet weather persists, the level of disease can greatly increase because of the hail-caused wounds. The disease that is likely will be either bacterial speck or bacterial spot. As these pathogens are so weather dependent, it is hard to predict the actual course of events, but hail damage increases the susceptibility to these particular diseases.

If rain is forecast and weather remains cool, it seems reasonable to consider spraying when the fields are sufficiently dry to allow ground rigs to apply a treatment. I don't think most growers would need to rush to the field or to aerially spray. While the chemical control program is preventive, the level of control has generally been only moderately helpful. So, it is reasonable to not panic to an absolute must-spray decision. Perhaps the exception would be if speck was prevalent before the recent rains.

Farm Advisor Brenna Aegerter in San Joaquin County and I are evaluating chemical controls for bacterial speck in our respective locales. Note: varieties with resistance to bacterial speck race 0 are as susceptible to our abundantly present race 1 strain. Be prepared.

Hopefully the weather will warm and winds will dry the plants while rains are diverted to our lakes and reservoirs.

Hurriedly submitted by,

Gene Miyao

## Farm Advisor, Yolo, Solano & Sacramento counties

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