The Community GroundWorks Garden Newsletter

DIGGING IN

At Troy Community Gardens
Madison, WI

LATE BLIGHT AND OTHER BLIGHTS

In the last month or so, late blight has been identified in Wisconsin on both potatoes and tomatoes, with many reports of the disease invading area community gardens. Late blight seems to be the most feared disease of tomatoes and potatoes as it has the ability to kill a field of plants in a week or less. Some have asked whether the late blight was introduced by infected plant stock. When this question was brought to Amanda Gevens, Assistant Professor, Extension Plant Pathologist at the University of Wisconsin, she responded as follows: "Based on what we have learned of this late blight epidemic in WI so far, we do know that this was not the result of any infected plant material coming into our state earlier on in the season. It is most likely that our epidemic began when spores from infected tomatoes and/or potatoes (from nearby states) entered the southern part of WI at the end of July. There has been an early season late blight epidemic on tomatoes and then potatoes in the northeastern US, then it moved westward through commercial potato and tomato production. This is a 'community disease' in that it can affect susceptible tomatoes and potatoes wherever you are and whoever you are (back yard gardener or large commercial producer). The spores come in on air, land on plants, and cause disease. Literally, the spores fall from the sky and our plants are sitting ducks. Although there are fungicides that can help to protect plants, they are not 100% fail proof and not everyone will choose to apply fungicides for a variety of reasons. Based on our laboratory studies, we know that the strain or type of Phytophthora infestans (the late blight pathogen) that we have here in WI on potato and tomato is consistent with one found in NY earlier in the season."

Late blight, dark brown lesions on stem

Fuzzy growth of late blight on underside of leaf

Late blight lesions can occur on leaves, stems or fruit. Lesions usually begin as pale green, then turn brown to black. Lesions can grow quite large, and may destroy entire leaves. Under humid conditions, the lesion margin will show white spore-producing structures, particularly on the underside of leaves. On tomato fruit, brown lesions appear on the top and sides of green fruit.

— ***continued on page 2***

September 19 Events

Composting Workshop
9 am - ~11 am
Free, and all Troy Gardeners can earn volunteer time by attending the Composting Workshop

Work Day
~11 am - noon
Tasks to include picking Mendota Orchard apples for Harvest Festival

Harvest Festival
12 noon - 3 pm
Cider pressing with antique cider press, potluck and door prizes! Gather near yellow shed and bring a dish to pass, a chair, plate and utensils. *Family and friends welcome.*

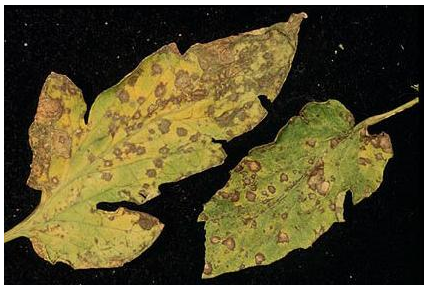
Blight *continued from page 1*

It is important to destroy all late blight plant material, including potato tubers and tomatoes, by bagging them up and throwing them in the trash. Do not compost them and make sure you don't leave tomatoes on the ground or potatoes in the ground as volunteer plants from these the next year will be infected with late blight too.


Early blight

Besides late blight, there are other blights that may be mistaken for late blight. Early blight is primarily a foliage disease but may also cause fruit to rot near the stem in late fall. Symptoms of early blight first appear on older leaves and are characterized by irregularly shaped brown spots with concentric rings. Usually the tissue surrounding each spot turns yellow. The spots enlarge to 1/4 to 1/2 inch in diameter and coalesce, causing the leaf to turn brown and drop. As the plant loses its leaves, the fruit become exposed to the sun and susceptible to sunscald. Infected fruit have dark, leathery, sunken spots near the stem end. Only green fruit are infected.

Septoria leaf spot is first noticeable by small, circular spots on the upper surface of the lower leaves. There is often a corresonding water-soaked spot on the lower leaf surface. These spots are smaller and more numerous than those of early blight. They are 1/16 - 1/4 inch in diameter and have a tan or light-colored center. Tiny black fruiting bodies may be found in the center of these lesions. Infected leaves may drop from the plant. Spotting of the stem and blossoms may also occur.


Septoria leaf spot

For more information about early blight and septoria leaf spot, see the University of Wisconsin Extension bulletin A2606 at http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/A2606.PDF. If you don't have access to the Internet, you can call the the Learning Store at UW Extension at 877-947-7827.

Late blight has been identified in area community gardens, at Troy Community Farm and by some community gardeners at Troy. Using the above information, please check your tomato and potato plants to determine if they are infected with one of these diseases. If you suspect you have late blight, it is important the infected plants, including fruit and/or tubers, be destroyed to prevent further spread of the disease. Infected plant material should be pulled, bagged and disposed of in the trash. If you suspect you have early blight or septoria leaf spot, you should remove or thoroughly incorporate plant refuse at the end of the season. If the refuse is buried deeply and decays, the fungi have less chance of overwintering. Do not compost infected vines unless your compost pile gets hot enough to kill the disease organisms (at least 115 degrees). The new Madison Area Community Gardeners Email Listserv is a perfect place to discuss these types of issues. Please consider joining if you have access to email. See information below.

New Madison Area Community Gardeners Email Listserv

During discussions held at the August Garden Leaders Gathering hosted by Sheboygan Community Garden, many gardeners and garden leaders expressed an interest for a new email listserv specifically for communication among community gardeners. From that request, the new Madison Area Community Gardeners Listserv was created. To join, visit http://groups.google.com/group/madison-area-community-gardeners. This group is meant to connect community gardeners around the Madison area in order to share advice, questions, and successes.

This publication is produced by the Troy Community Gardens Newsletter Subcommittee.
Contact us at 608-241-1821 or email schneiderjill@charter.net.

A LOCAL FOOD-LOCAL BUSINESS SYNERGY

By Kurt Schneider

More than likely, every Troy gardener has seen or used our mowers, rototillers or trimmers. You may wonder where they came from or what they cost us. All have been donated, some by our own gardeners, some through Freecycle and some through end-of-day garage sale leftovers. Although a number have been received in a state of disrepair, thanks to our Equipment Subcommittee members and some assistance from the MATC Marine & Small Engine Department, we've brought new life to those older machines.

Jim, Jerry and Tom

In addition, we can thank TCO Power Center as a resource for affordable parts, supplies and ongoing technical advice. The three owners, brothers Jim, Jerry and Tom, collectively have over 100 years of small engine sales and repair experience. More than happy to share their knowledge, they have been instrumental in maintaining our equipment.

TCO Power Center, formerly TC Olson, was purchased by the brothers from the Olson Estate in 1970. The business is almost as old as the internal combustion engine itself. TCO began its life as The Olson Cylinder Grinding Company in 1910. The machine shop and auto parts facility was located at 607-09 East Washington Avenue. The original building stands yet today.

Thomas C. Olson was married and lived on Madison's near east side, across from Tenney Park on Marston Avenue. His thriving business was renamed TC Olson Company and later incorporated in 1926. In the post-WWII era, Wisconsin was the center of small engine manufacturers and the lawn care equipment industry. Tecumseh, Briggs & Stratton, Kohler, Clinton and Wisconsin Engine were among Wisconsin's early small engine manufacturers. With the advent of the 1950's power lawn care equipment boom, TC Olson incorporated small engine sales, service and repair into its offerings. TC Olson was among the first to sell and service Toro and Lawn-Boy power equipment. It eventually became known as TCO Power Center, dropping auto parts all together. TCO moved to its current location at 717 Atlas Avenue. Concurrently, and for only a few years, there was a companion shop on Freeport Road just off Verona and Raymond Roads.

Today TCO Power Center sells new equipment and parts plus repairs all types of two- and four-stroke power equipment. In addition, they provide expert advice and occasionally a good story to anyone entering their doors. The next time you need a repair, a part or just some advice, stop in to see Jim, Jerry or Tom. You can share the story of Troy Gardens with them—it's a good one too!

Garden Scenes

Photo Credits:
Left: Christie Ralston
Center: Laura Paglush & Jason Buesing
Right: Christie Ralston

Upcoming Events

Herb Garden Workday*

Wed., Sept. 16, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Join volunteer stewards Marie and Nancy for some herb garden cleanup and final herb harvest day! Meet at the Troy herb garden.

Will Allen at Goodman Atwood Center

Thurs., Sept. 17 (see below for details)

Composting Workshop at Troy Community Gardens*

Sat., Sept. 19, 9 am - 11 am

Community Gardens Work Day*

Sat., Sept. 19, after Composting Workshop

Community Gardens Harvest Festival*

Sat., Sept. 19, 12 noon - 3 pm

Michael Pollan Book Discussion & Potluck

Sat., Sept. 23, 6-7 pm, Troy Gardens

Call Katie (246-4547) at Lakeview Library for more info.

Troy Gardens Tree Walk: Wood Recycling*

Sat., Oct. 3, 9 - 10:30 am, Troy Gardens

Join Certified Arborist Peter Kaseman-Wold of Goodland Tree Works for a tree walk! The focus of this walk will be wood recycling. Meet at the yellow shed on the front of the land.

*For details about these events, please call the Community GroundWorks office at 240-0409.

GARDEN LEADERS GATHERING

Garden Security and Living Fences
Sunday, September 13, 2 pm

Join us for a garden leaders gathering exploring the issue of theft in community gardens and brainstorming solutions together. We'll be gathering at Quann Community Gardens (intersection of Bram and Koster Streets behind Alliant Energy Center Coliseum, on the south edge of Quann Park) on Sun., Sept. 13, from 2 pm to 4 pm. Quann gardeners will be hosting the event and will demonstrate one of their solutions to deter theft – a living fence. Please join us; all are welcome. RSVP to Nicole Craig at CAC (NicoleC@cacscw.org or 246-4730 x208).

THANKS FOR THE IDEA!

The Newsletter Subcommittee received several comments about the timeliness and usefulness of the information contained in the Succession Planting article included in the July Issue. We'd like to thank Chris Stuesser, one of Troy's gardeners, for the article idea and for also providing a great source for some of the information. Thanks, Chris. Keep those ideas coming.

WILL ALLEN AT GOODMAN ATWOOD CENTER - SEPTEMBER 17

Will Allen is a farmer and activist who has transformed two acres within an urban, impoverished Milwaukee neighborhood into a hotbed of agricultural innovation. As co-founder and director of Growing Power, he teaches low-cost farming methods, involves young people in cultivating a culture of nutritious eating, and experiments continuously with new designs for food distribution amongst the urban poor. Growing Power has become a destination for people from around the world interested in the sustainable and local food movements. Mr. Allen received a prestigious MacArthur Foundation fellowship in 2008.

The Wisconsin Humanities Council is proud to host Mr. Allen at the Goodman Community Center on September 17 at 6 pm. The Wisconsin Humanities Council, which produces the Wisconsin Book Festival, supports and creates public programs that use history, culture, and discussion to strengthen community life for everyone in Wisconsin. The event will be an opportunity for people to hear some of Mr. Allen's thoughts on urban life, community building, and why he continues to literally get his hands dirty in Milwaukee. Will Allen will be speaking in the Evjue Community Room. His presentation will lead into a lively community conversation and more! Check the Website for more details: www.wisconsinbookfestival.org. The event has been organized by the Wisconsin Humanities Council, with help from the Community Action Coalition and the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition.