

Avoid potato Bacterial Wilt!

Potato bacterial wilt is a threat to potato yields and quality. It occurs in all potato growing areas.

Follow these guidelines to reduce disease and increase production.

How to identify wilt

Sudden wilting and drying of plants in the field even during wet periods, suggests bacterial wilt infection. The following are further symptoms of wilt.

- In rapid disease development, entire plants wilt quickly without yellowing.
- Sections of diseased plants may wilt completely and dry up, while the remainder of plants appear healthy.
- The leaves of the plant turn yellow.
- The growth of the plant is stunted.
- There is a dark brown colour in the inner section of the stem.
- A white creamy liquid oozes out when you cut the stem near the base.



Plant infected with bacterial wilt

- Tubers are black, or have black eye buds.
- Heavily infected tubers have soil stuck to the tuber eyes.

What to do with wilt-infected plants and tubers

- Uproot all infected plants and tubers, with the surrounding soil, and put them in a 2- foot deep pit and cover with clean soil, or burn them.
- Do not put diseased plants and tubers on your compost heap.
- The plants next to the diseased plants should be harvested only for home use, not for seed.

How to AVOID wilt

Use clean seed or tubers of tolerant varieties, bought from reliable sources such as Kenya Seed Company, stockists or farmer groups.



Tubers infected with bacterial wilt showing coloured eyes and ring

- Disinfect all tools with household bleach (JIK) before and after use.
- Rotate with crops that are not related to potato, such as maize or beans. Do not use tomato, pepper or eggplant as they can also be infected and carry this disease.
- Plant potatoes in disease-free fields that have not been used for growing potato or tomato for at least 3 years.
- Avoid planting in low-lying or water-logged areas.
- Plant only whole, undamaged tubers.
- Weed regularly and earth up taking care not to damage roots and stems.
- Remove any potato plant from the previous season while weeding because it may be carrying the disease.
- Ensure that farmyard manure and compost are fully decomposed to avoid spreading disease.
- Check fields regularly for wilt and other diseases.
- Uproot and dispose of any diseased plants.
- If more than 1 out of 1 00 plants are infected with bacterial wilt, do not use the crop for seed production.
- Keep seed store clean and check regularly for rotten tubers. Remove and burn as described above.

Source of clean seed/tubers

Certified seed from Kenya Seed Co. or authorised farmers or farmers groups.

