

# Disease Fact Sheet

## Tomato Blight Early/Late *Genus: Phytophthora infestans*

### What is it?

Tomato Blight, early/late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*), a disease which is caused by a fungus-type organism that spreads rapidly in warm, wet weather and attacks the foliage and fruit of tomatoes, causing rotting.

### How is it transmitted?

Airborne spores, especially in windy conditions. Warm, rainy, and windy weather creates ideal conditions for blight to spread, especially in areas like Pukekohe. Spores can travel easily.

### What symptoms to look for

**Early blight**, Look for spots on leaves with yellowing of the lower leaves. The affected foliage eventually turns brown, shrivels, and dies. **Late blight**, look for irregular greenish-brown, mushy spots along the edges of leaves. Dark patches may also appear on the plant's stem. A greyish mold often develops on the underside of leaves or the stem. Leaves eventually shrivel and die.

### Impact

**Early blight** is generally less destructive but can spread rapidly. **Late blight**, however, is far more aggressive — if left untreated, it can cause fruit rot and destroy entire crops within 48 hours. Without preventive measures, both diseases can spread quickly under favorable weather conditions, resulting in significant crop loss..

### Where is it present?

North America, South America, Europe, Asia, New Zealand, Australia

### How can I protect my plants?

Act quickly—**don't delay treatment**. Consult your local supplier, who can advise on products. Have a blight management plan in place. If conditions favour disease (humidity, cool nights, leaf wetness), apply protectant fungicides before symptoms show. Remove lower leaves to boost airflow and apply fungicides within MRL limits. Maintain hygiene, clean tools, and note that spores may still enter via vents. Copper products can help slow blight, but require full plant coverage.

Information compiled from



Figure 1: Early Blight

<https://croipaia.com/blog/early-blight-of-tomato/>



Figure 2: Late Blight

[plantura.garden/uk/vegetables/tomatoes/tomato-late-blight](http://plantura.garden/uk/vegetables/tomatoes/tomato-late-blight)