

Tomato-Tobacco Mosaic Virus

The plant disease caused by tobacco mosaic virus is found worldwide. The virus is known to infect more than 150 types of herbaceous, dicotyledonous plants including many vegetables, flowers, and weeds. Infection by tobacco mosaic virus causes serious losses on several crops including tomatoes, peppers, and many ornamentals.

Control for Seedling Growers and Gardeners

The most common method of transferring the virus from plant to plant is on contaminated hands and tools. Workers who transplant seedlings should **refrain from smoking during transplanting and wash their hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water. Tools used in transplanting can be placed in boiling water for 5 minutes and then washed with a strong soap or detergent solution.** Dipping tools in household bleach is not effective for virus decontamination. Any seedlings that appear to have mosaic symptoms or are stunted and distorted should be removed and destroyed. After removing diseased plants, never handle healthy plants without washing hands and decontaminating tools used to remove diseased plants.

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG1168.html>

What this means for the community garden

This virus is very contagious . The most common sources of virus inoculum for tobacco mosaic virus are **the debris of infected plants that remains in the soil and certain infected tobacco products that contaminate gardeners' hands.** Cigars, cigarettes, and pipe tobaccos can be infected with tobacco mosaic virus. Handling these smoking materials contaminates the hands, and subsequent handling of plants results in a transmission of the virus. Therefore, do not smoke while handling or transplanting plants.

Please smoke outside the garden area, and wash your hands before you handle any of the community garden tools and equipment, to prevent the risk of spreading the disease to the rest of the community garden. Notify the coordinator immediately if you see any signs of this virus in your garden and decontaminate all the garden tools you have used.

As well, please use crop rotation each year to avoid contamination the next year.