



**Disease or herbicide damage ?**

**Ajay Nair**  
**Department of Horticulture**  
**Practical Farmers of Iowa 1-18-2019**

# **Proper identification is the key**

- Make the best use of your smartphone
- Keep a tab on daily activities carried in and around your crop
- Are the symptoms localized in the field?
- Is there a pattern?

## Herbicide damage could look like disease but..

Clues to chemical injury include uniformly distributed symptoms that appear suddenly in the entire field or within areas in the field and absence of plant pathogen signs (e.g. fungal mycelium, fruiting structures, or spores; or bacterial ooze)

HEALTHY leaves shine with a rich dark green color when adequately fed

PHOSPHATE shortage marks leaves with reddish-purple, particularly on young plants.

POTASH deficiency appears as a firing or drying along the tips and edges of lower leaves.

NITROGEN hunger sign is yellowing that starts at tip and moves along middle of leaf.

MAGNESIUM deficiency causes whitish stripes along the veins and often a purplish color on the underside of the lower leaves.

DROUGHT causes the corn to have a grayish-green color and the leaves roll up nearly to the size of a pencil.

DISEASE, *Helminthosporium blight*, starts in small spots, gradually spreads across leaf.

CHEMICALS may sometimes burn tips.



Diagrams: Margaret Preece

Healthy

P

K

N

Mg

Drought

Disease

Chemicals



**Fertigation with Cal-Mag and Epsom salt along with foliar sprays of Epsom**

**Interveinal chlorosis:  
Magnesium deficiency**





A close-up photograph of a tomato plant's leaves. The leaves are green but show significant damage from herbicide drift, including brown necrotic spots and irregular, torn edges. A yellow arrow points to a specific area of damage on one of the lower leaves. The background is a dense layer of dry straw or mulch.

**Herbicide drift**

**Cupping of leaves**



## Paraquat damage





# **2,4-D damage on tomatoes**



**Tomato leaves cupping**



# Response could be cultivar specific

Scarlet Red

Jet Star







**This is not herbicide drift. This is physiological leaf rolling**



# Physiological leaf roll

Indeterminate cultivars of tomato are reported to be more sensitive to this disorder than determinate cultivars.

My recommendation would be to:

1. reduce stress on plants as much possible,
2. Don't overfertilize and overwater,
3. Avoid severe pruning



**Presumably 2,4-D drift on melons**



A close-up photograph of a tomato plant showing signs of glyphosate damage. The leaves are green but exhibit significant bleaching and necrosis at the base of the leaflets. The damage is characterized by yellowish-white patches and areas where the leaf tissue has died and turned brown. The text "Bleaching at the base of leaflets: Glyphosate damage" is overlaid in white at the bottom of the image.

**Bleaching at the base of  
leaflets: Glyphosate damage**







**Sulfentrazone damage**







**Prodiamine damage**





**Dicamba damage**

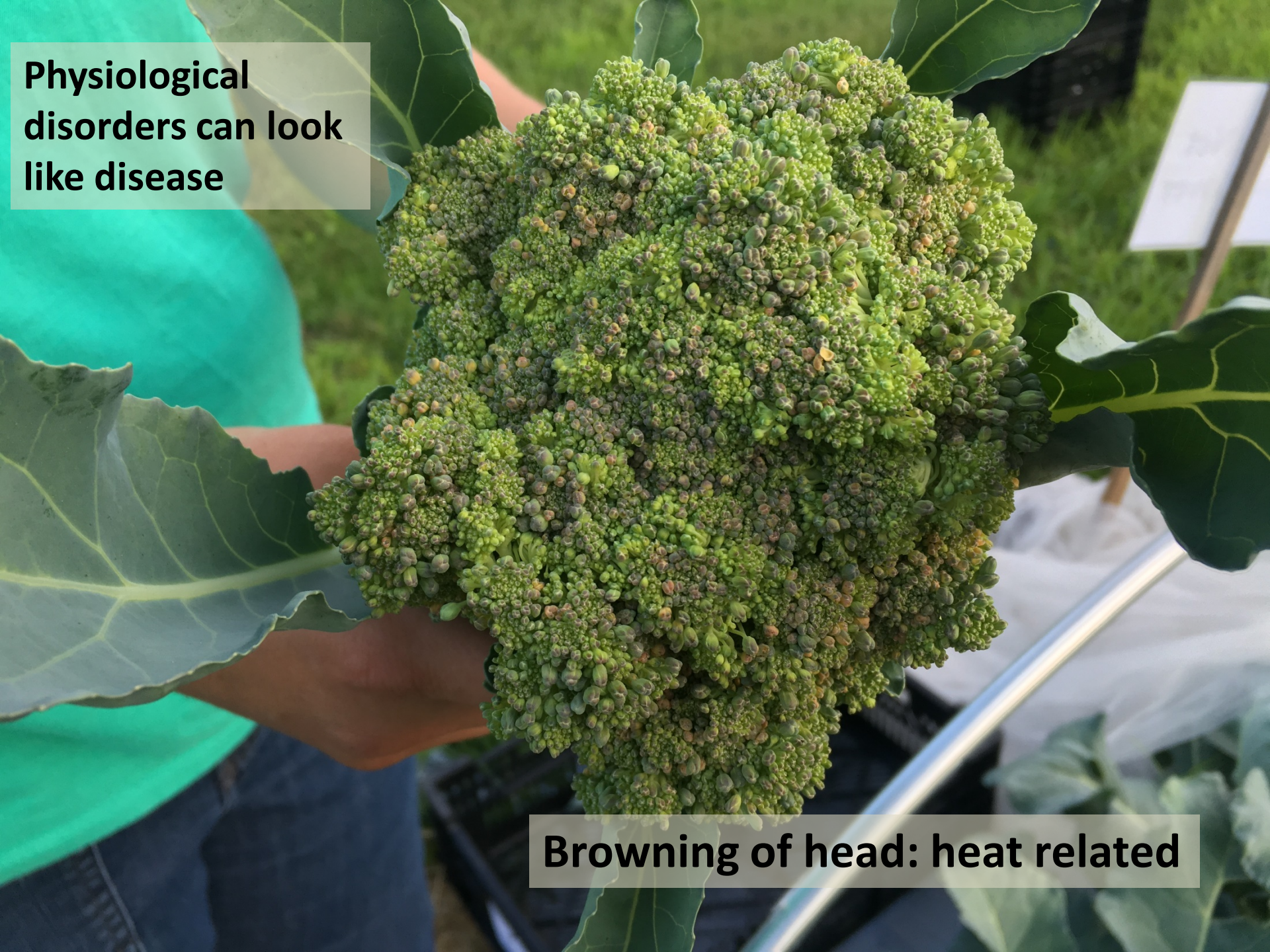




Spray drift from adjacent sweet corn plot: The product sprayed Lexar (Syngenta). Active ingredient: s-metolachlor, atrazine, and mesotrione



**Physiological disorders can look like disease**



**Browning of head: heat related**



# Tomato transplants in the high tunnel: Sudden death







**Heat stress on tomato inside high tunnels: sides fail to open; 140°F; kill**

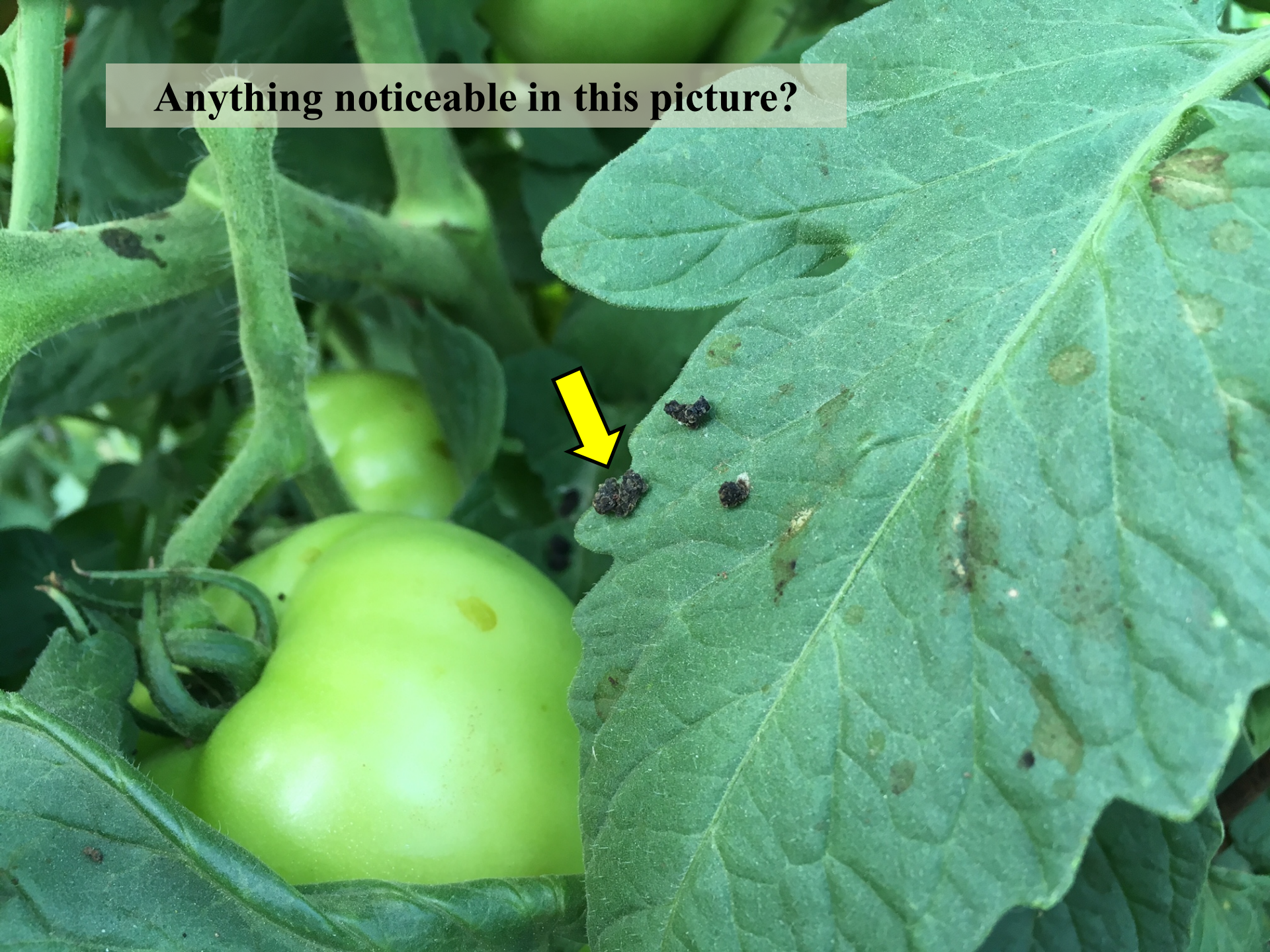




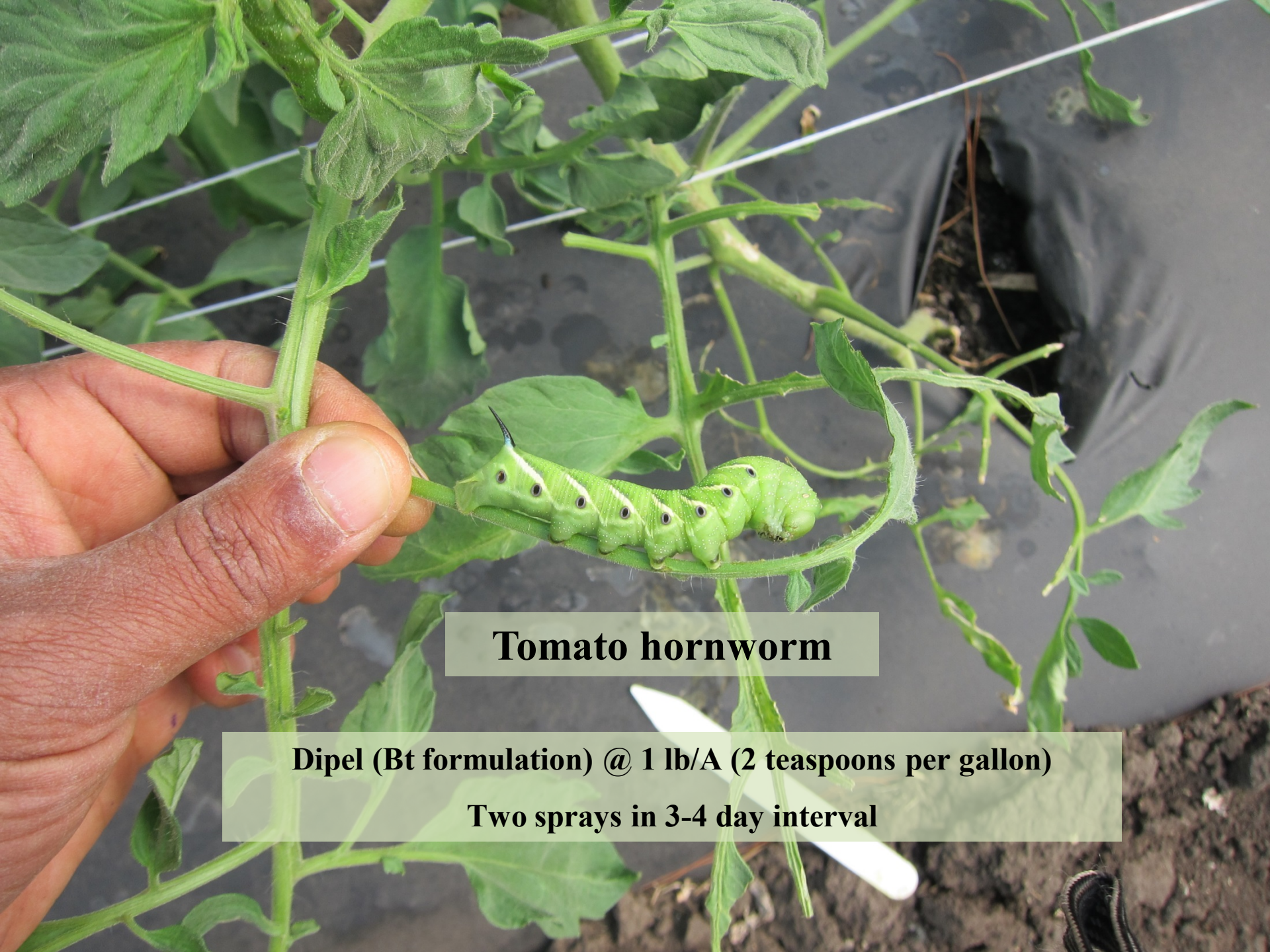
**Sunburn in pepper**



**Anything noticeable in this picture?**







## **Tomato hornworm**

**Dipel (Bt formulation) @ 1 lb/A (2 teaspoons per gallon)**

**Two sprays in 3-4 day interval**





**Blossom end rot**

**Nutrient deficiency: Calcium**  
**Irregular watering**

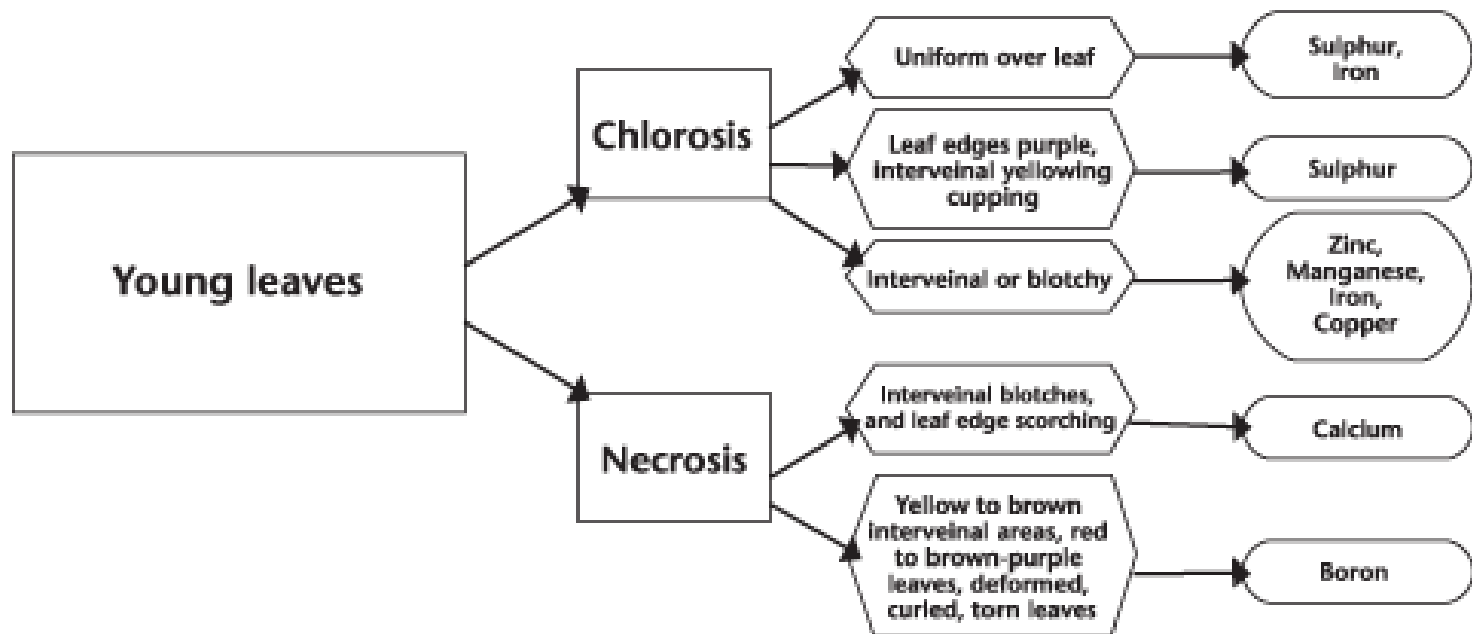
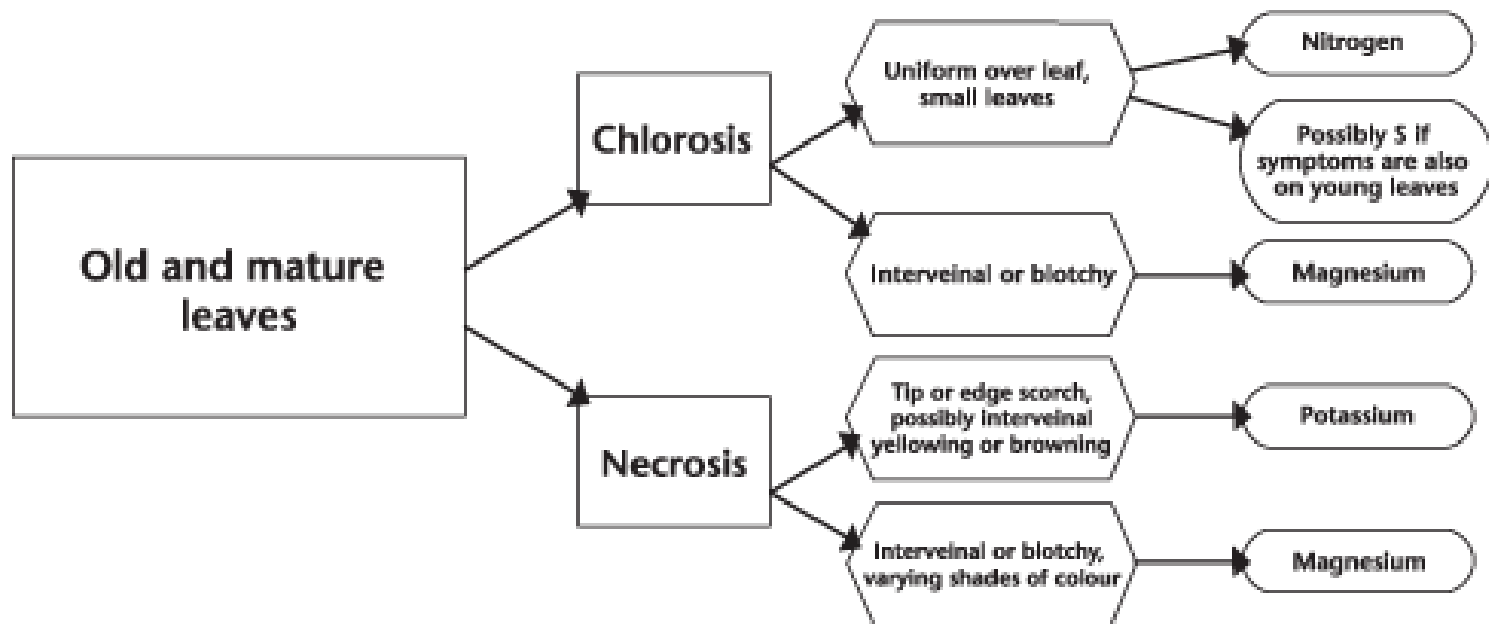


## **Progression of blossom end rot**



**Nutrient deficiency: Calcium**  
**Irregular watering**







# Take home message

- Proper identification is the key
- Do some investigative work
- Weather data: [mesonet.agron.iastate.edu](http://mesonet.agron.iastate.edu)
- Pictures of individual plants and the entire field
- Communication with neighbors and IDALS



# Contact

**Dr. Ajay Nair**

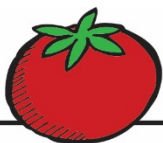
**145 Horticulture Hall**

**Department of Horticulture**

**Iowa State University**

**Email: [nairajay@iastate.edu](mailto:nairajay@iastate.edu)**

**Phone: 515-294-7080**



---

**SUSTAINABLE  
VEGETABLE  
PRODUCTION**

---



**<http://extension.iastate.edu/vegetablelab>**





**Here we go !**