

Bacterial Speck, Bacterial Spot (*Pseudomonas Syringae* pv. tomato, *Xanthomonas campestris* pv. vesicatoria)



Figure 1 Bacterial speck on tomato leaf



Figure 2 Bacterial speck on tomato



Figure 3 Bacterial Spot on pepper/leaf

Damage

Symptoms of bacterial speck initially appear as small, black spots (less than 1/8 inch diameter) on leaves of affected plants. As the disease progresses, the spots will spread to branches, petioles, and flowers and affected fruit will develop tiny, dark spots that do not penetrate deeply. Bacterial spot produces larger, “water-soaked” brown lesions on the leaves and stems of affected plants; these are initially yellowish-green but darken as they age. A severe infection can cause extensive yellowing and leaf loss in affected plants. Affected tomatoes and peppers will develop small, raised blister-like spots, which become larger and turn brown and scabby as the plants mature.

When Active

Bacterial speck thrives in cool, wet weather and is most commonly introduced through infected seed and transplants. In contrast, bacterial spot thrives in warm, wet weather and can be introduced through seed, transplants, or contact with infected plant material.

Susceptible Plants

Most varieties of tomatoes are susceptible to bacterial speck and bacterial spot; some varieties of pepper are susceptible to bacterial spot.

Prevention Methods

Prevention is key as treatment options are limited. Remove all tomato and pepper debris from your garden at the end of the season, and burn or bury debris from infected plants. Avoid replanting tomatoes or peppers in the same area each year. Water from the base of the plant and avoid getting the foliage wet and avoid working in your garden when plants are wet (e.g. after a rain) to minimize the spread of disease.

Treatment Methods

Symptomatic plants can be removed to minimize the spread of disease to healthy plants, but the fruit from infected plants is edible and you may choose to just let the disease run its course. Bactericides containing copper are available and may help in controlling both diseases if applied early and regularly.

Additional Information/Resources

- UW Extension Bulletin [A2604 Tomato and Pepper Disorders: Bacterial Spot and Speck](#)
- Dane County UW Extension Horticulture Hotline 608-224-3721 (M-F 9 a.m.-12 noon, April 15-October 31) or horticulture@countyofdane.com

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