

ALERT! Tomato Seed and Plants Potentially Contaminated with Virus of Concern

Tomato brown rugose fruit virus (ToBRFV) has been found this spring on seed of two tomato varieties, Sweet Prince and Brandywise, being sold to growers and gardeners. This emerging virus (first detected in the US in 2018) is considered more serious than others because of the ease of spread when handling infected plants, the virus's long-term survival ability and damage to fruiting plants.

Recommendations:

- If you are notified by a seed company regarding infected ToBRFV seed or see announcements about seed you purchased, the seed and any plants grown from them, must be destroyed **NOT** composted, surface buried or thrown in a cull pile.
- The infected lots reported were plants from **Sweet Prince Lot #s NN21-SL-SP and NN22-SLSP2 and Brandywise Lot #s NS 10-11-br.**
- There are no treatments/sprays that will cure plants of ToBRFV or any other plant virus.
- This virus can survive in soil for years, thus there is potential for re-occurrence in future years in addition to potential for spread to other tomato and pepper plants with handling.
- Follow strict sanitation practices if you have infected plants, to include disposal or sterilization of all clothing, tools, trays, pots, hoses, benches, etc. Clean surfaces where plants have been with diluted bleach (an example of an appropriate solution is 8.2 fluid ounces of an 8.25% bleach made up to 1 gallon of solution—check whether the concentration listed on the label of the bleach you have is 8.25% and adjust if necessary).
- Handling infected seed **is not** known to allow seed-to-seed transmission of ToBRFV because the virus resides inside the seed not on the seed surface.
- Handling infected plants followed by handling healthy host plants **is** a transmission method.
- Minimize touching plants with hands, clothing and tools. Brushing plants to obtain sturdier stems is a dangerous practice because it may move viruses like ToBRFV, as well as bacterial pathogens. Watering seedlings is not considered to have enough force to transfer ToBRFV.
- When plants are handled, such as during transplanting, use hand sanitizer on gloved hands between plants when there is concern ToBRFV might be present.
- Check plants for symptoms at least once a week. Symptoms include mosaic and mottle, yellowing, bubbling in the leaf blade, and a 'fern leaf' look. If suspicious symptoms are seen, photograph and submit a sample to your local plant clinic. Symptoms will likely start to appear by about 4-6 weeks after seeding, but some varieties remain free from symptoms even though infected. See below for a symptom image guide.

Symptom guide: <https://www.vegetables.cornell.edu/pest-management/disease-factsheets/tomato-brown-rugose-fruit-virus/>

For more information: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/import-information/federal-import-orders/tobrfv/faqs/general/general>

In New York, the Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic is available for testing:
<https://plantclinic.cornell.edu>