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Control of

Septoria Leaf Spot

on Tomatoes

BY DR. C. M. NAGEL*

Septoria leaf spot continues to be the most destructive tomato disease in South Dakota. Experimental work by the Plant Pathology Department at South Dakota State College has uncovered two fungicides more effective than Bordeaux mixture for its control.

Yellow cuprous oxide used as a wet spray has proved satisfactory. Tests show that it is surpassed by a new chemical compound which will not be generally available during 1946 and which requires more tests. The two were selected after the department made extensive tests of virtually all promising fungicides.

Yellow cuprous oxide is available under various trade names. It may be secured from your local seed dealer or druggist. Growers should follow the directions on the label carefully.

One and a half pounds of yellow cuprous oxide to 100 gallons of water is recommended as a wet spray. However, this product is frequently put up in pack-

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ages which contain additional materials which help hold the spray material to the foliage. Because of this extra material, an increased amount of the mixture is used. It is important, therefore, to follow directions on the package for the proper amount to use.

The spray should be applied before the disease occurs. The first application is usually made about July 10 and repeated every 10 days until September, or until the onset of cool nights checks the destructiveness of the fungus.

It is important to wet the plant completely with the spray. Both the upper and lower surfaces of the leaves must be covered with the protective fungicide. Spraying both sides is necessary because much of the infection takes place on the lower surface of the leaves where a film of moisture collects during the night as a result of dew or rain. The spores of the fungus require such a film of moisture for germination, hence for infection of the plant. Consequently, the presence of the fungicide on the lower surface of the leaf is even more important than on the upper surface, if the greatest benefits are to result from the spraying.

The value of any fungicide, in general, is to protect the plant against infection from parasitic organisms. It is not possible to cure a plant once the disease gets a start; but it is possible to reduce the amount of infection by keeping all the foliage coated with an effective fungicide. The fungicide is best used as a preventive.

This material supplements Extension Circular 408, "Tomato Leaf Spot Diseases in South Dakota," which has a full-color picture of Septoria leaf spot and gives further information on the disease. A copy may be obtained from the county agent's office or the Extension Service, Brookings, if you do not have one. The information on this card supplements the information on page 7 under control measures.
