

## Local Gardeners Face Tomato Problems

One of the prize possessions of most gardeners is their tomatoes. Sadly, this year's weather has not been friendly to most individuals' gardens. Yet, there are individuals who are currently able to pick nice ripe tomatoes and enjoy them with their family. However, some of those ripe tomatoes are being impacted by disease, pest, and other issues.

Typically the number one issue related to the fruit of the tomato plant deals with tomatoes that have sunken in, scarred bottoms. This problem is Blossom-end Rot. Blossom-end Rot is a dry, black, leathery scar on the blossom-end of the fruit brought on by a calcium deficiency. To prevent this, try to ensure your plant always has proper moisture.

This year, I would expect some gardeners to have Fruit Cracks on their tomatoes. Fruit Cracks will usually occur during hot rainy periods when the fruit is exposed to the sun. This is more likely to occur if we continue getting a lot of rain and temperatures stay high. Fruit Cracks will appear as creases or cracks around the point where the stem attaches to the fruit.

In contrast, Catfacing is the puckering and scarring at the blossom end of the fruit. The cavities created by Catfacing may penetrate deep into the fruit making it impossible to eat. This is often caused by cool cloudy weather when the plant is blooming or when some herbicides are used. Given our weather this year, I would not expect to find tons of Catfacing since temperatures have been fairly high.

One issue that gardeners might not realize they are facing with their tomatoes is damage from stink bugs. Stink bug feeding on green fruit appears as dark pinpricks surrounded by a light, discolored area. Once the fruit ripens and you cut into the tomato, you will find white, spongy tissue. These white spots are caused by the feeding. To prevent this, try to control all stink bugs in your garden by either hand removing the bugs, utilizing an appropriate herbicide, or organic control method.

If you would like to learn more about vegetable production, lawn care, or flowers, then you might want to consider signing up for this year's Purdue Master Gardener Course in Putnam County. The course begins on August 24<sup>th</sup> and classes will take place on Monday nights from 6:00-9:00 PM at the Putnam County Extension Office (152 East Columbia St., Greencastle). The final class will be on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Participants will be exposed to a wide range of subjects including soil and plant science, diagnosis of plant problems, and culture of vegetable, flower, landscape, and fruit plants. Materials and expenses for the series of classes cost \$ 115 per participant. There is an additional cost of \$40 for a second family member, if a second family member would like to participate in the class and would like to share the reference notebook. The fee for the class covers such items as a reference notebook, mailings, and name badges. These materials all become part of the Master Gardener's personal collection.

If you would like more information about signing up for the Purdue Master Gardener Course, then please give us a call at the Purdue Extension Office at 765.653.8411 or email Jenna Nees at [smith535@purdue.edu](mailto:smith535@purdue.edu). Please register early to ensure your spot in this course. Registration deadline is August 12<sup>th</sup>.

Visit our homepage at [www.extension.purdue.edu/putnam](http://www.extension.purdue.edu/putnam) or you can contact the local Purdue Extension Office by calling 765.653.8411 for more information regarding this week's column topic or to RSVP for upcoming events. It is always best to call first to assure items are ready when you arrive and to RSVP for programs. While many publications are free, some do have a fee. Purdue University is an equal access/equal opportunity institution. All times listed are Eastern Time.

**Upcoming Events:**

August 7 – August 23 – Indiana State Fair

August 11 – World Breastfeeding Month Celebration, Robe Ann Park, 12:00-2:00 PM

August 12 – Sign Up Deadline for Purdue Master Gardener Course

August 24 – Start date for Purdue Master Gardener Course

August 26 – Women Walk Putnam County 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Luncheon

August 27 – IEHA Spring District Meeting – Sullivan County

August 28 – My Record of Achievement forms due

August 29 – Purdue Extension and Girl Scouts of America Color Splash, 9:00 AM

September 3 – Putnam County Fair & 4-H Club Association Board Annual Meeting