

Growth Cracks on tomato

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FIG. 1

Type Problem: Plant Disorder

[Plant pathologists usually group causes of plant health problems or diseases into two categories. Some diseases in plants are caused by non-living factors including environmental stress or improper cultural practices. This category of diseases is referred to by a variety of names. The term 'Plant Disorder' is utilized herein. Other equivalent terms and references include 'abiotic diseases', 'physiological disorders', 'non-parasitic diseases', 'non-infectious diseases', and 'non-pathogenic diseases'

Other plant diseases are caused a living pathogen (or more than one pathogen including fungi, bacteria, viruses, and nematodes. This category of diseases is referred to by a variety of names including 'biotic diseases', 'parasitic diseases', 'pathogenic diseases', and 'infectious diseases'.]

Period of Primary Occurrence: mid spring to early June

- Especially when heavy rainfall occurs after an extended period of dry weather conditions
- Can also occur in fall grown tomatoes

Description / Symptoms

- Cracks appear in the stem end of tomatoes
- Two types of cracks appear in our area
 - Radial cracks (spread outward from the stem scar) - occur when temperatures are greater than 90° Fahrenheit and humidity is high (Fig. 1)
 - Concentric cracks (circular cracks around the stem) occur from rapid fruit growth stimulated by abundant wet weather or irrigation after a dry/drought period (Fig. 4)
- Black moldy growth can develop along cracks
- Cracks can easily be invaded by organisms that promote fruit rot
- Variations in soil moisture and temperature can cause cracking
- High nitrogen level combined with low potassium can also cause cracking



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4

Best Management Practices (BMP)

- Maintain regular irrigation and mulch to keep soil temperature and an adequate, consistent soil moisture level
- Maintain proper plant nutrition
- Plant resistant varieties
- Remove ripe fruit immediately after a rain to reduce cracking
- Plant at proper planting times for best temperatures



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Always remember to read and heed six of the most important words on the label:
“KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN”

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