POTATO SCAB

Potato scab normally invades the tuber when it is small. There are two forms of scab that can appear on potato tubers. One is called common scab, which is normally deep pitted. The other form of scab is powdery scab. Powdery scab does not normally make the deep pits but does cause the potato to become unmarketable.

The susceptibility of the potato tuber to scab depends upon the amount of auxin that is present in the tuber. There are several things that can affect the auxin level in the tuber and protect it against the invasion and damaging results due to this fungus.

1. The level of scab can be reduced by the application of 1 gallon per acre of zinc plus 1 gallon per acre of manganese incorporated in the cover soil at the time of planting. Both of the nutrients will increase the plant's ability to manufacture auxin. The auxin is then transferred to the tuber and tends to protect it against the invasion of scab.

2. The treatment of seed with Stimulate. When seed is treated with 20 oz. of Stimulate per ton of seed pieces, the yield is normally increased 15%. This has been determined over 4 years of research at two major U.S. universities. In addition, the auxin in Stimulate will significantly reduce the amount of scab damage done to the tubers.

3. The use of Nitrate Balancer throughout the season. The Nitrate Balancer will increase the half life of auxin in the plant tissue. This is a significant factor in maintaining enough auxin in all plant parts, particularly the tubers. One can easily see these results by the more even sizing of tubers. The even sizing of tubers is an indication that there is plenty of auxin in the tuber in order to cause a sink for more sugar to move down to the developing tuber.

All the above methods will decrease the plant's susceptibility to scab damage. One can use any of the above treatments or combination of all treatments in order to greatly reduce this problem. All of the above treatment will tend to increase the amount and quality of yield.

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