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EC59-1827 Plant Diseases : Mosaic Diseases of Pepper

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PLANT DISEASES

JOHN L. WEIHING

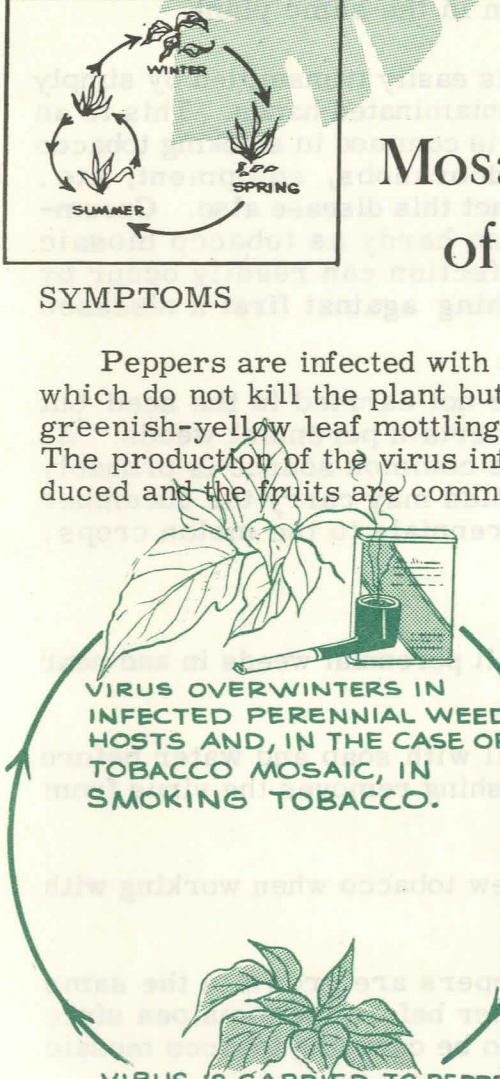
Extension Plant Pathologist

Mosaic Diseases of Pepper

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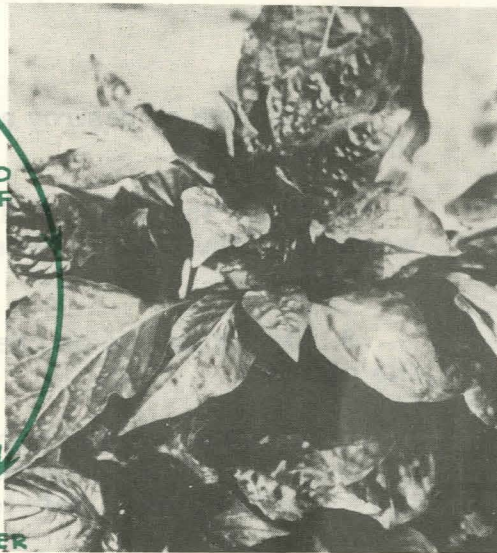
SYMPTOMS

Peppers are infected with a number of virus diseases which do not kill the plant but cause various degrees of greenish-yellow leaf mottling, crinkling and distortion. The production of the virus infected plants is greatly reduced and the fruits are commonly mottled and deformed.



VIRUS OVERWINTERS IN
INFECTED PERENNIAL WEED
HOSTS AND, IN THE CASE OF
TOBACCO MOSAIC, IN
SMOKING TOBACCO.

VIRUS IS CARRIED TO PEPPER
FROM PERENNIAL WEED HOSTS,
BY APHIDS OR BY WORKERS
HANDS CONTAMINATED WITH
TOBACCO MOSAIC.



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CAUSE

The most common virus diseases infecting pepper are tobacco mosaic and cucumber mosaic. These viruses often occur in combination in the same plant.

Tobacco mosaic virus is easily transmitted by simply handling the plants with contaminated hands. This is an extremely hardy virus. It is common in smoking tobacco and can be deposited on doorknobs, equipment, etc. Tomatoes frequently contract this disease also. Cucumber mosaic virus is not so hardy as tobacco mosaic virus, however, virus infection can readily occur by merely handling or brushing against first a diseased and then a healthy plant.

These two viruses are not carried in the seed but apparently overwinter in certain perennial weeds. As for tobacco mosaic a more common source is probably the smoking tobacco. Aphids may carry the cucumber mosaic virus from the perennials to the melon crops.

CONTROL

1. Remove or destroy all perennial weeds in and near the garden area.
2. Wash the hands well with soap and water before working in the plants. Washing removes the virus from the hands.
3. Do not smoke or chew tobacco when working with the plants.
4. If tomatoes and peppers are grown in the same garden, work with the pepper before the tomatoes since tomatoes are more likely to be carrying tobacco mosaic virus.
5. Use malathion, rotenone or nicotine to control aphids.