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Tomato Fruit Set

Just about the time you think you're going to really start to get some tomatoes, a heat dome sets in over the Midwest! Talk about stopping fruit set right in its tracks!

Even summer crops have their limits, I guess! For tomatoes, that limit to fruit set occurs when temperatures remain above 75 degrees F at night on the lower end. On the upper end, daytime temperatures above 95 degrees F with dry, hot winds will cause poor fruit set on tomatoes as well. High temperatures interfere with pollen viability and/or cause excessive style growth leading to a lack of pollination.

Recovery isn't instantaneous! According to KSU Horticulture Specialist Dr. Ward Upham, it usually takes about three weeks for tomato flowers to develop into fruit large enough to notice that something is wrong plus an additional week before tomatoes are full size and ready to start ripening. That's going to delay your BLT's a little bit!

To help combat extreme temperatures that can reduce fruit set, breeders have developed what are known as 'heat-set' tomatoes like Florida 91, Sun Leaper and Sun Master. These varieties are bred to set fruit at higher temperatures. Just understand that the difference is only about two to three degrees. In other words, good for a little high temperature stress, but maybe not sufficient to fully offset some of the temperatures we've seen in July.

Fortunately, cooler temperatures will allow flowers to resume fruit set and we can look forward to ripe tomatoes once again!

Kansas River Valley Experiment Field Fall Field Day

The annual Kansas River Valley Experiment Field Fall Field day will be held on Tuesday, August 9th at the field near Rossville. The field day program begins at 6:00 p.m.

This year's field day topics will include presentations from four KSU Extension Specialists. Extension Plant Pathologist Dr. Doug Jardine will discuss current disease issues and share an update on seed treatments. Northeast Area Agronomist Dr. Stu Duncan will keep the disease discussion theme as he shares information on when it pays to apply foliar fungicides in the Kaw River Valley. Ajay Sharda, KSU Extension Specialist from Biological and Agricultural Engineering will share some of his research findings from the planter research he has been conducting. Field Agronomist in Charge Dr. Eric Adey will wrap up the evening with a discussion of the causes and cures for tip dieback in corn.

The field is located one mile east of Rossville on U.S. Hwy 24, on the south side of the road. Following the field day, a BBQ meal will be provided courtesy of Wilbur-Ellis. To pre-register, call Joanne Domme at the Shawnee County Extension office at 785-232-0062, ext. 100 by 5 p.m. on Monday, August 8. Commercial pesticide applicator continuing education credits have been applied for. Hope you can attend!