

# Disease Fact Sheet

## Tomato Ghost Spot/Grey Mold *Genus: Botrytis cinerea*

### What is it?

Ghost spotting is a condition that affects tomatoes. It's caused by a fungus called ***Botrytis cinerea***. The fungus tries to infect the tomato but fails, leaving faint, pale spots (halos) on the fruit.

### How is it transmitted?

Wet, humid conditions help the fungus grow and spread. Airborne spores and infected plant material.

### What symptoms to look for?

Faint, pale halos (3 to 8 mm in diameter) on the fruit. White halos on immature fruit and yellow halos on ripe fruit. Along with the halo, a small necrotic fleck (dark spot) may appear. The spots rarely develop further, but if conditions become more favourable, the disease can progress to fruit rot.

### Impact

These spots make the fruit unmarketable. Over time as the spores increase, it can rot the fruit. Other impacts include reduced yield and discolouration.

### Where is it present?

Wet, humid countries including New Zealand, United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, South America and South Africa.

### How can I protect my plants?

Ghost spotting on tomatoes can be reduced, but not completely stopped. As summer comes, some affected fruit might still need to be picked, which lowers its market value. Turning off heaters is an option, but it may slightly raise the risk of spotting. **Environmental Control:** Maintain a dry environment to reduce fungal risk. **Fruit Load:** Reducing fruit load helps prevent disease spread. **Handling Infected Fruit:** If *Botrytis* is found, remove the affected fruit carefully and place it in a plastic bag to stop spores from spreading. **Fungicides:** Biological and chemical fungicides should be used as a preventative measure.



Figure 1: faint, pale spots (halos) on the fruit

