

Tomato and watermelon diseases cost money and time

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Though tomatoes and watermelons have a large demand, they are often targeted by pests and diseases which leave them unmarketable due to necrosis.

As it becomes easier to spot diseases and pests, the loss of crops is becoming more and more unlikely. However, there are still diseases to watch out for, as

Kimberley Cochran, assistant professor in plant pathology at Texas A&M AgriLife Research in Uvalde, pointed out.

During her talk at the Combined Vegetable and Wheat Field Day on May 18 at the extension in Uvalde, Cochran provided information on damaging diseases.

“In my research, I have noticed that the yellow leaf curl is the most common in Texas. Downy mildew is also very

common,” she said. “And lot of the ways to combat these diseases include rotating crops, or waiting until the next season, sometimes even resorting to the two year rotation.”

With the early blight, a two year rotation is the best option, Cochran said. To eliminate early blight, a farmer has to optimize air circulation.

And with each disease, Cochran said catching it

in its early stages is the best option.

“A lot of these diseases you want to catch quickly, you really want to get a handle on it very quickly,” she said.

“Otherwise, you have to wait until the next season and rotate your crops then or you have to wait two years,” Cochran said.

Farmers have to keep an eye on crops – but not all year round, Cochran said.

“You do have to keep an eye out, but it’s not always of the utmost importance,” she said.

“Plants are the most vulnerable around

flowering, so you have to be really careful then and on high alert.”

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