Bacterial Wilt on Tomato

Recognize the problem
Bacterial wilt disease is caused by bacteria. The disease is seen in the crops by wilting of lower leaves and eventually the whole plant, without any leaf spotting or yellowing. Sliced stems placed in water will produce tiny milky strands after a few minutes. The disease causes rapid death of infected plants.

Background
The bacteria live in the soil. They like warm weather and wet soils. The bacteria infect plants through their roots. The bacteria survive in the diseased plants or soil for a long time, affecting members of the tomato family. The disease is also spread by damaging the roots and stems of plants when cultivating.

Severity of the disease can be increased by the existence of small worms called nematodes, which attack the roots. This weakens the roots and allows bacteria to enter.

Management
Non-chemical control:
- Plant resistant varieties.
- Avoid damaging the roots and stems when planting and cultivating.
- Avoid planting crops on seed beds or land reported with the disease.
- Remove the affected plants and burn them.
- Rotation with crops such as rice, maize, beans, and okra for a long period controls the disease.
- Control root-knot nematodes.

There is presently no known effective chemical to control this disease.

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Kenya, People's Republic of China

Authors: This factsheet is based on information written for "The Tomato Farming Handbook", first published by KENGAP Horticulture, 2011.
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