

MANAGING BACTERIAL BLIGHT:SIX EASY STEPS

Any bacterial disease in plants can be managed effectively only through bacterial blight resistant variety no chemical gives complete control. In the absence of blight resistant variety in pomegranate and constraints in breeding due to tight linkage of genes for big size and susceptibility to bacterial blight, integrated management is being recommended which includes, planting new orchards with bacterial blight free planting material, balanced plant nutrition with sufficient organics and beneficial organisms, avoiding rainy season crop if disease is observed, orchard sanitation, avoiding too many/unwanted sprays and chemical sprays at 7-10 days interval depending on season. several farmers have benefitted using the IDIPM schedules and ICAR-NRCP Advisories.

Though the disease is managed effectively with the integrated schedule, yet it faces challenges due to mono-cropping of Bhagwa the most susceptible variety, sale of blight infected planting material, unrestricted sale of spurious chemicals in market and unqualified consultants misleading the innocent farmers. Those facing bacterial blight can manage bacterial blight in 6 easy steps:

1. Put plants on rest soon after harvest in December till February. Take main pruning and provide recommended nutrition for rest period soon after harvest.
2. Put plants on stress from March till there is natural defoliation without chemical defoliant.
3. Allow naked defoliated stems to face sun for another 20-30 days till the tip portion of the branches start drying. Due to high temperature and low moisture, the bacteria residing safely in the nodes (source of infection in next season) of the naked stems will desiccate and die.
4. Go for light pruning removing upper 10-15 cm of stems, put recommended fertilizer doses, irrigate and start the new crop.
5. Take need based sprays of insecticides, fungicides, nutrients, growth hormones and bactericides only at 7-10 days interval.
6. All blight affected orchards in the community should follow the same schedule for promising results.

Six easy ways to control bacterial blight in community approach



Harvest the fruits of previous mrig bahar (November-December)

Take main pruning and provide recommended nutrition for rest period (December to February) soon after harvest

Put plants on stress from March till there is natural defoliation without chemical defoliant



Allow naked defoliated stems to face sun for another 20-30 days till the tip portion of the branches start drying (encircled)

Go for light pruning clipping upper 10-15 cm of stem, put recommended fertilizer doses, irrigate and start the new crop

Take need based sprays at 7-10 days interval during crop season