



---

## PRESS RELEASE

---

3038 Ewings Road • Newfane, NY 14108  
(716) 778-0026 • Fax (716) 778-9711  
[www.heimillergreenhouses.com](http://www.heimillergreenhouses.com)

### Buy Local Tomato Transplants This Spring to Avoid Late Blight Disease

#### For immediate release:

Orchard Park, NY, New York State Flower Industries, April 5, 2010 - Last year many gardeners were surprised and frustrated by a disease called late blight that killed cherished tomato plants across the northeast. The cause was a water mold called *Phytophthora infestans*, which causes a disease known as late blight. This disease is most famous for its effects on potatoes in Ireland in the mid-1800s, where it caused widespread famine. Tomatoes are also susceptible to late blight, as many gardeners found out last year.

“Last summer was unusually cool and wet”, said Margery Daughtrey, Senior Extension Associate with the Department of Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology of Cornell University. “These environmental conditions allowed the disease to be more widespread and more injurious to tomatoes than we have ever seen before in NY.”

What can gardeners do to avoid this problem this year? First, destroy any potato plant “volunteers” that regrow after winter – dig them up and bag them and send them to the landfill. Purchase healthy looking tomato transplants that have been locally produced from seed. “The disease is not known to be carried on tomato seed,” said Daughtrey. “Locally grown tomatoes should be disease free,” said Mark Adams, Adams Fairacres Farm, Poughkeepsie, NY.

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker said, “One of the advantages of New York's cold winters is that they effectively kill the fungus that causes late blight in tomatoes and potatoes, allowing our growers and gardeners a fresh start every year with seed-grown plants. With that being said, we do remind and encourage New Yorkers to closely monitor their tomato and potato plants for this devastating disease as it can be introduced during the growing season.”

“Don't worry about your soil,” said Betsy Lamb, Ornamentals Coordinator for the New York State Integrated Pest Management Program. “If you saw the disease last year, it is not lingering in the soil to attack your tomatoes this coming season. It is always a good idea not to plant the same crop in the same place year after year, but late blight is one disease that is not going to last in the soil from one year to the next.”

“If the weather is once again unusually cool and wet, and your tomatoes or potatoes happen

to develop late blight, please bury or bag these diseased plants,” suggested Daughtrey, “— they can be a source of contagion for farmers’ crops nearby. Organic farmers, in particular, may face severe crop losses from this plant disease because the crop protectants they use are not highly effective against late blight.”

“Gardeners’ experience with late blight last year gives them an excellent reason to buy locally -produced vegetable transplants from NY greenhouses this spring” said Bill Chase, Chase Greenhouses, Rush, NY. “You’ll get high quality plants, and definitely reduce your risk of having late blight on your tomatoes in 2010.”



Ronald Heimiller from Heimiller Greenhouses LLC of Newfane, NY. Tomato transplants will be available starting the week of May 9th.

New York State Flower Industries is a non-profit organization with members across the state. Their mission is to support and promote greenhouse professionals from retail and wholesale businesses in New York State.

Contact:  
Karen Hall  
PO Box 1243  
Orchard Park, NY 14127  
716-941-3502