

Alternaria alternata vs. Alternaria solani

Impact of both fungi on various potato cultivars: field/lab trials and surveys 2009-2012

Tuesday 14 May 2013

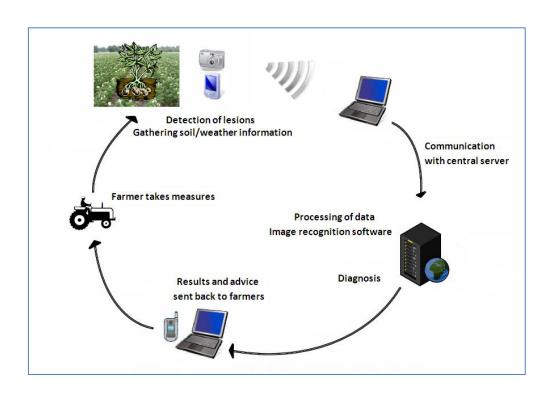
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LeafSpot: diagnosis of lesions



- → Gathering of thousands of lesions in 2009-2012 for validation of the system/epidemic studies
- →All samples plated out on agar for presence of (pathogenic) fungi





Findings earlier reported



- EuroBlight Arras/St.Petersburg
- FAPR Carlow
- A) Manganese excess
- B) Ozone damage
- C) Early blight
- D) Ozone damage



Many spots not caused by early blight yet were often still treated as such: waste of fungicides, real cause not tackled



Early blight

So how many lesions actually contained *Alternaria* spp.? (excludes late blight)

Year	Total # lesions	Total A. solani	Total A. alternata
2009	768	214 (27.9%)	395 (51.4%)
2010	1201	166 (13.8%)	694 (57.8%)
2011	3373	1171 (34.7%)	1575 (46.7%)
2012	2901	440 (15.2%)	959 (33.1%)
Total	8243	1991 (24.2%)	3623 (44.0%)





The role of *Alternaria alternata*

Alternaria solani and A. alternata both often found inside lesions on potato leaves

Pathogenic fungi or saprophytic fungi?



Consequences for treatments

Current situation: *A. solani* definitely named as pathogen, *A. alternata* unsure: many people spray fungicides just in case when spots are found





Trials

Comparing pathogenic properties of both fungi:

- -Lab trials; controlled circumstances
- -Field trials; inoculated fields ensuring presence of fungi
- -Statistical analysis: probability of competition





As previously done by PPO/PRI (2005, Dutch report), similar setup

Leaflets of 8 cultivars artificially inoculated (10x 10µl droplets, 100 spores)

Wounding of half the leaves (provides easy access for fungus)

Inoculation with 3 different isolates per fungus + untreated

Storage in climate chamber

Measure size of lesions (8 days after inoculation)





Results applicable to all cultivars. ('Seresta' shown here)

A. solani

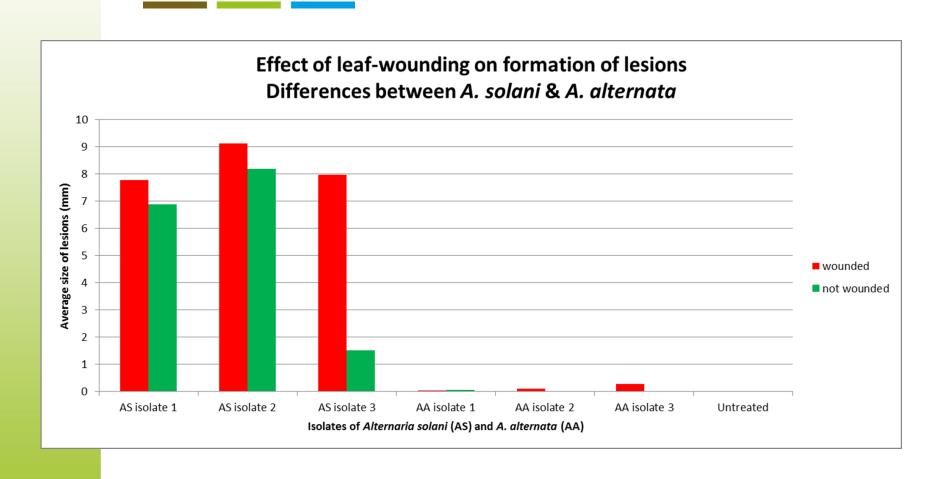
A. alternata

Control



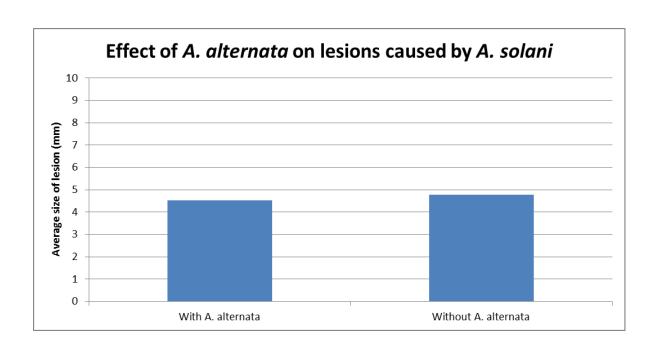












Can A. alternata enhance lesion growth?

Applied on top of *A. solani* lesions it does not (controlled conditions in lab)

Not shown: same results on top of magnesium deficiency & apparent ozone damage from fields





A. alternata already present in high concentrations (allergen alerts!)







3 treatments, separated to prevent cross contamination

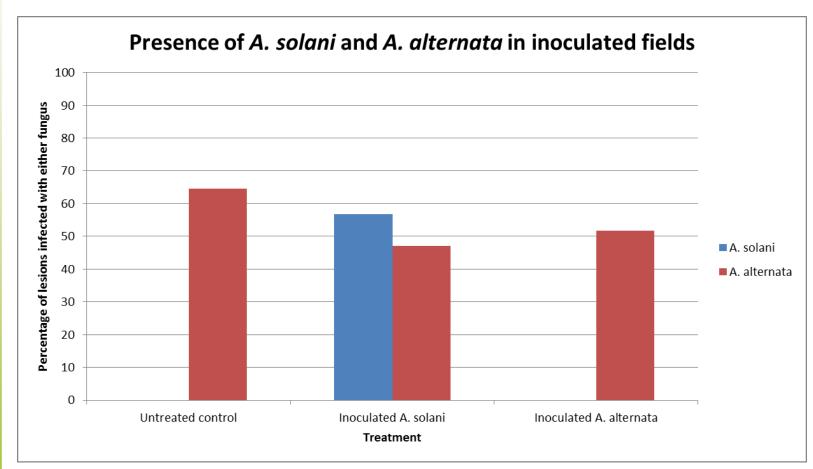
- -A. solani (cocktail)
- -A. alternata (cocktail)
- -Untreated

In triplo



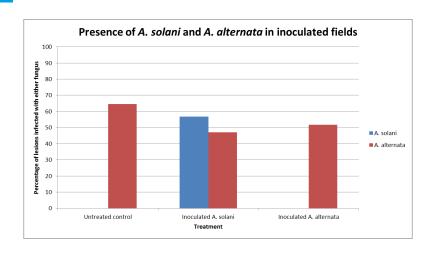












- Untreated control confirms *A. alternata* already present in high numbers.
- *A. solani* only found in lesions on *A. solani* inoculated plants (no cross-contamination)
- Inoculation with *A. alternata* did not lead to an increased number of lesions containing the fungus
- Number of lesions equal in untreated/A. alternata. Higher in A. solani (as expected)





Statistics: co-occurrence

Assumption:

- 1) if both *Alternaria* species are pathogenic, they have to compete for resources
- 2) If competition takes place, occurrence of either fungus depends on the presence of the other
- 3) Setup: Both fungi have to be present: only include plots where both fungi have been found
- 4) Statistical analysis of co-occurrence: compare expected and observed frequencies (chi-square test)





Statistics: co-occurrence

2012 trials		
Total # of lesions	265	
Total # of lesions infected with A. alternata	137	
% of total lesions infected with A. alternata	51,7	
Total # of lesions infected with A. solani	197	
	With A. alternata	Without A. alternata
Observed # of lesions of A. solani	101	96
Expected # of lesions of A. solani (51,7% of 197)	101,85	95,15
Chi-square test	p = 0,9041	

- A. alternata appears in lesions regardless of presence of
- A. solani: no apparent competition



Overview

There are no signs of *A. alternata* being a pathogen on potato in the Netherlands.

Integrated Pest Management / sustainability: spraying fungicides against an apparent non-pathogen is not quite the best way to go

A. alternata at the very best is a weak pathogen able to do very minor damage.

It acts mostly as a flag indicating a different problem





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Thank you for your attention

