

# TOP 20 TOMATO PROBLEMS

Rebecca  
McMahon

Horticulture  
Agent

# 1. SPIDER MITES

- Suck the juices out of plant leaves
- Stippled appearance
- Horticultural oils and insecticidal soaps
- Hard stream of water



## 2. SEPTORIA LEAF SPOT

- Tiny black spots on lower leaves
- Leaves yellow and die from the bottom up
- Favored by warm, wet weather
- Caging or staking, mulching, and rotation will help prevent the disease.
- Preventative fungicides:
  - Chlorothalonil or fixed coppers.



### 3. EARLY BLIGHT

- 1½" circular lesions on lower leaves
- Leaves yellow and die from the bottom upward
- Favored by wet, warm weather
- Caging or staking, mulching, and rotation will help prevent the disease.
- Preventative fungicides:
  - Chlorothalonil or fixed coppers.



## 4. BLOSSOM END ROT

- Brown-black, leathery spots on fruit bottom.
- Prevent by proper watering practices
- Some varieties are very susceptible



## 5. PHYSIOLOGICAL LEAF CURL

- Leaves curl when the weather changes from cool and moist to hot and dry
- The plants will be fine in a few days.



## 6. CRACKING

- Tomatoes in Kansas crack due to weather
- Harvest tomatoes as soon as they start to color, then ripen indoors
- Some varieties are more crack resistant



## 7. 2,4-D HERBICIDE INJURY

- Leaves are cupped, thickened or leathery, and develop an uncharacteristic fan shape.
- Plants will overcome moderate damage.
- Poor production is likely
- 2,4-D can spread on the wind for a few miles

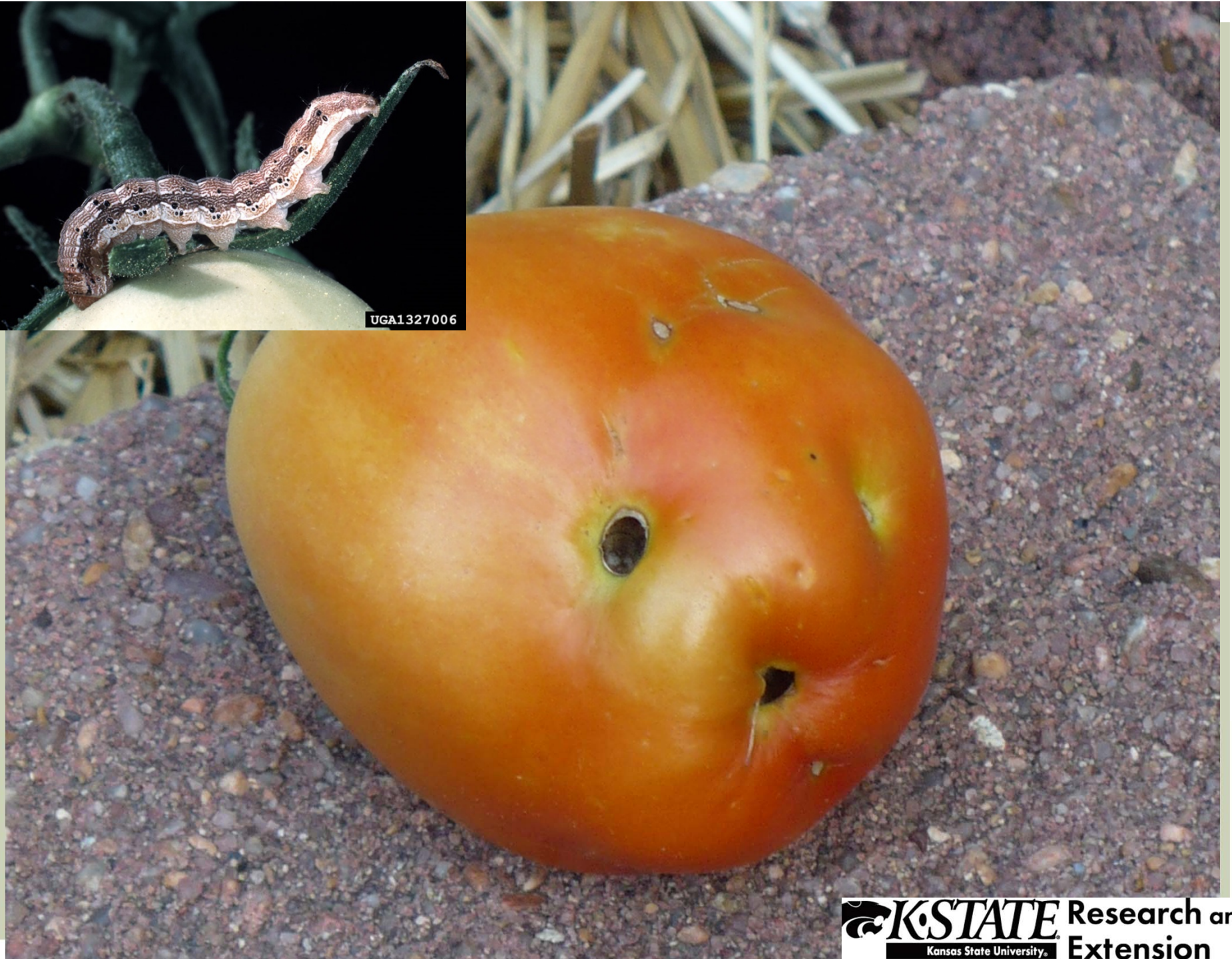


**2,4-D Herbicide Injury**



## 8. TOMATO FRUITWORM

- Caterpillar that bores holes into fruit
- Only spray if there is major damage
  - cyfluthrin, lambda-cyhalothrin, neem, rotenone/pyrethrin, or rotenone.



## 9. APHIDS

- More common in the early summer
- Damage plants by sucking juices
- Most common garden insecticides will kill aphids



## 10. HOT WEATHER

- Daytime temperatures are above 85-90 degrees
- Overnight temperatures above 75 degrees
- Prevents good pollination
- Gap in fruit production



# 11. ROOT KNOT NEMATODES

- Microscopic round worms in the soil
- Infect plant roots
- Symptoms include:
  - Yellowing of leaves
  - Low yields
  - Premature plant death
- Plant resistant varieties or grafted tomatoes



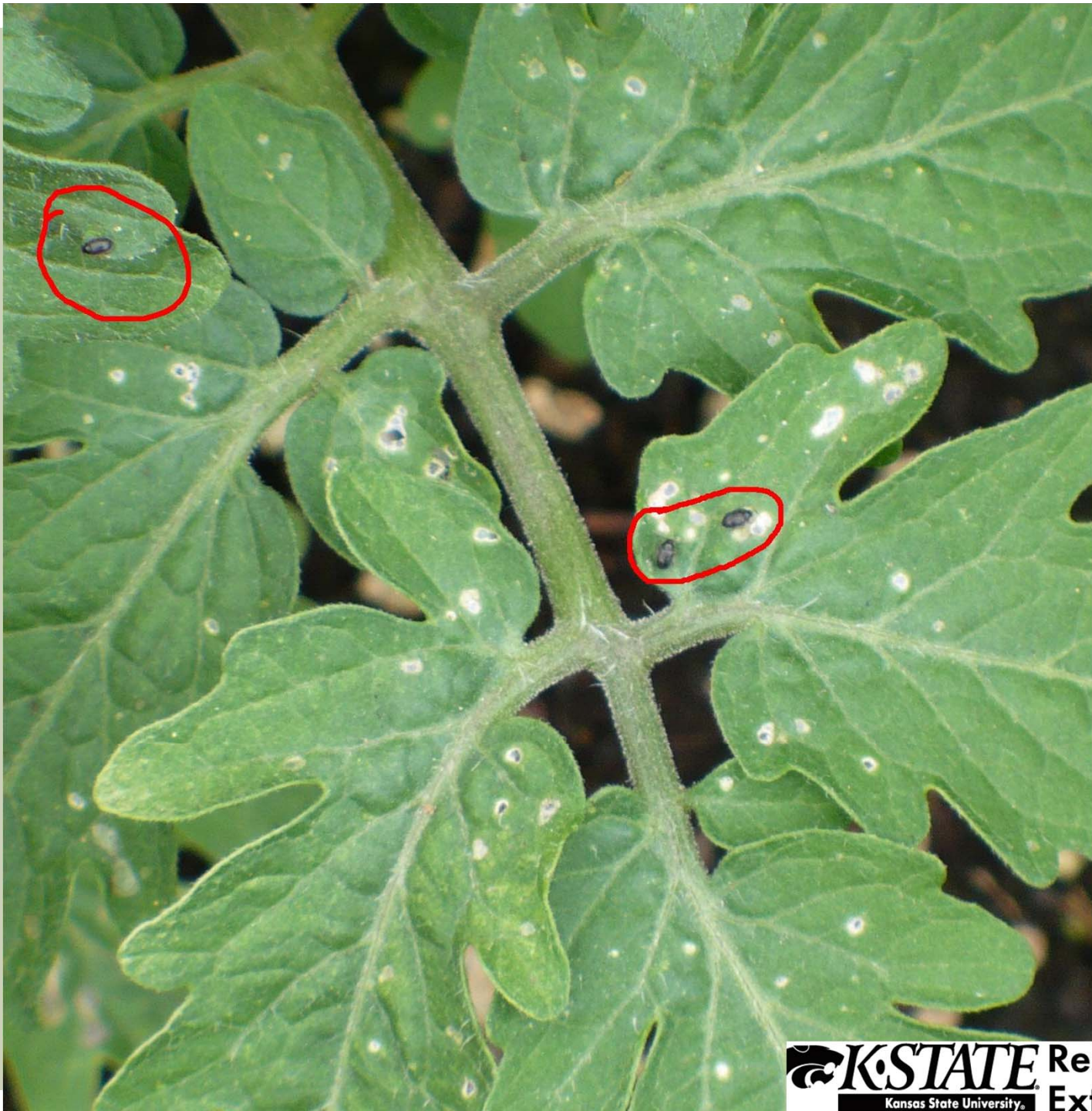
## 12. CATFACING

- Oddly shaped fruit
- Seams & odd cracks/growths
- Incomplete pollination on large-fruited varieties in the early season



## 13. FLEA BEETLES

- Tiny black beetles
- Very small holes in the leaves in the early spring
- Tomatoes usually outgrow damage
- Controlled with neem oil or permethrin.



## 14. BACTERIAL SPECK/SPOT

- Tiny black specks and larger black spots
- Occur on tomato fruit in very wet weather
- Looks bad, okay to eat
- Cool moist conditions or warm moist/humid



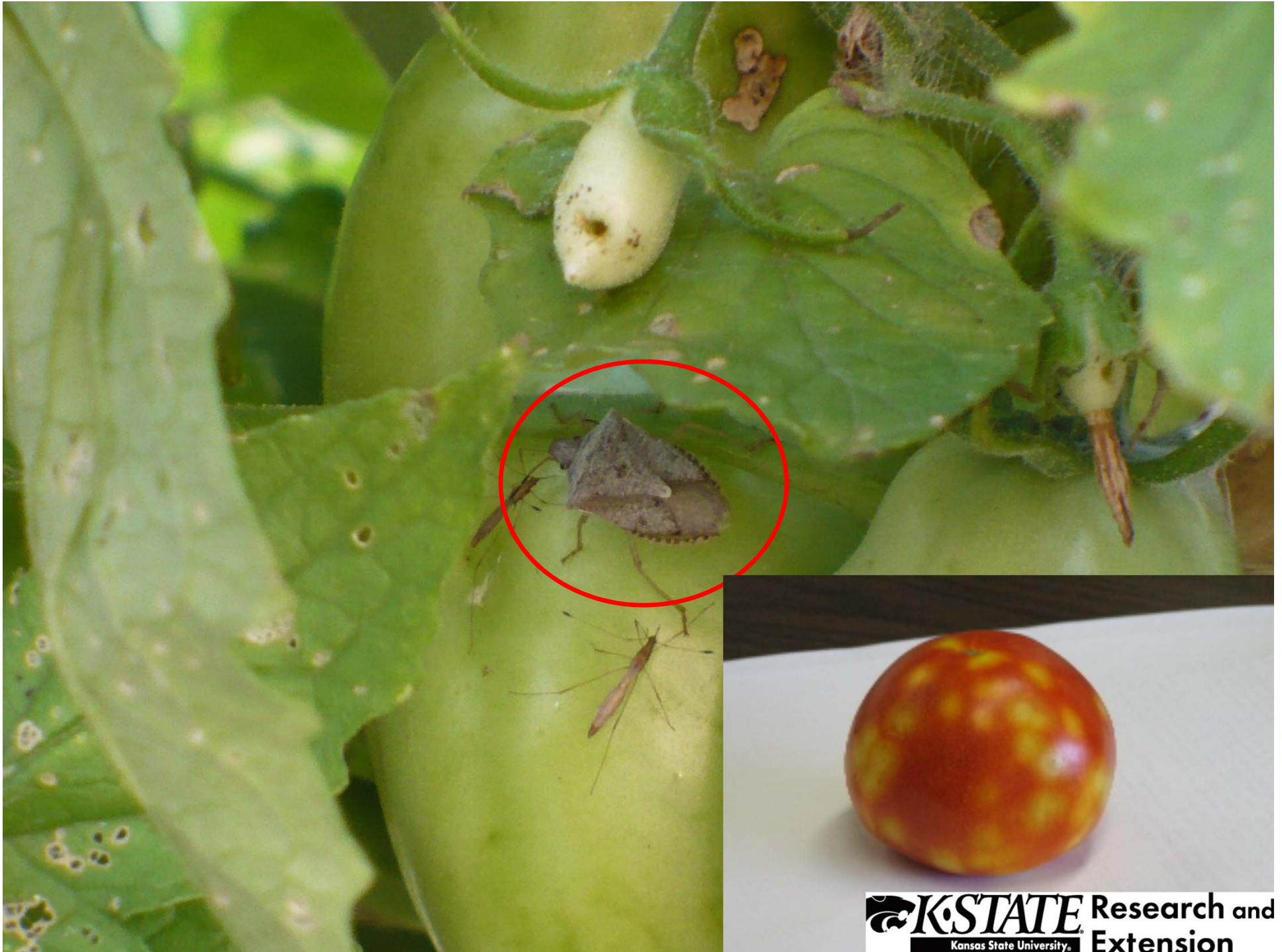
# 15. TOMATO HORNWORM

- Green caterpillar with characteristic “horn”
- One caterpillar can be very damaging
- Find it and squash it!



# 16. STINKBUG

- “Cloudy spots” on fruit right under skin
- Stinkbug feeding damage
- Control is usually ineffective



# 17. FRUIT ROTS

- Fungal diseases that cause fruit to rot
- Usually due to contact with the ground
- Moist conditions near the ground
- Use mulch and cages



## 18. SUNSCALD

- Fruit can scald on the side facing the hot sun in the summer
- Discolored, papery-like splotch
- Usually caused by lack of leaf cover
- Remove affected fruit



# 19. CUTWORMS

- Early season cutworms often chew a plant off at the soil level.
- Later season cutworms can eat leaves.
- If the plant is totally cut off, replanting is necessary.



## 20. WALNUT WILT

- Walnut trees produce juglone
- Toxic to tomatoes and many other plants.
- Tomatoes planted near walnut trees will not grow well and often die.
- Avoid planting tomatoes near walnut trees.



**QUESTIONS?**