

Summary. Transplants are an excellent way to establish onion and tomato plantings. Beginning with healthy and vigorous transplants is the key to a successful crop. Vegetable seedlings are very sensitive to seedling diseases and must be protected. Use of solarization to disinfest the nursery bed is highly recommended as solarization kills many of the diseases of lettuce seedlings as well as weeds.



Fig. 1. Solarization for the nursery bed (left) and onion seedling nursery (center) tomato seedling (right).

Nursery bed preparation:

1. Construct raised seedbeds of 1 m wide where no eggplant, potato, or tomato have been grown for at least 3 years.
2. Incorporate 5 kg/m² of good compost into the bed.
3. If possible solarize the planting bed to kill diseases (Fig. 1. left).
4. Form shallow furrows with a stick. One ha of tomato will require 150 to 200 g of good seed.
5. Sow seed and cover lightly with soil.
6. Pat firmly with a rake, mulch and then water
7. Do not use fresh manure on a seed bed as it burns seedlings
8. After seedlings emerge push mulch off the seedlines to allow sunlight.
9. Young seedlings require sufficient water. One week before transplanting, reduce water to harden seedlings.
10. Tomato seedlings will be ready with 3 to 5 true leaves (15-25 cm high). Onion seedlings are ready to transplant with 3 to 5 well-formed leaves. Transplant on a cloudy day or in the late afternoon.



Fig. 2. Damping off in tomato seedlings

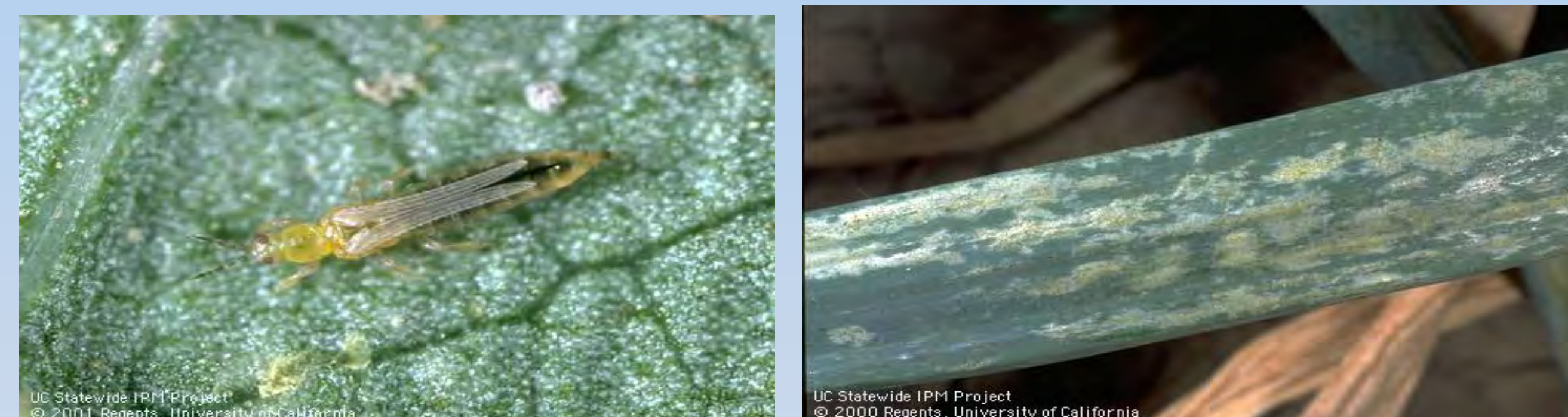


Fig. 3. Flower thrips (left) and thrips damage in onion (right).