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Volunteer potatoes harbor diseases (including viruses), insects and nematodes that have potential to increase the severity of these pests in present and future crops.

Potato volunteers are the first food source to emerge in the spring and serve as a host for early emerging Colorado Potato Beetle (CPB) adults. Though beetle defoliation of volunteers can be seen as a benefit, once the plants are defoliated and the CPB senses an emerging crop nearby the beetles start to migrate towards that crop, most often a commercial potato field. Colorado potato beetles being poor fliers (require a perch to take flight from) have a natural tendency to walk or march, as many entomologists refer to it, towards the next field. This means the beetle will enter the adjacent field from the crop edge and will allow a more vigorous second generation to develop. This often coincides with the tuber bulking stage soon after flowering, making this time critical for beetle management.

Defoliation threshold levels are reported as 10% during the first half of tuber bulking, four to six weeks, and 25% after bulking.



Key Message...

- **Monitoring field edges is a very important tool for determining when CPB's are preparing to enter a commercial field!**
- **Vine damage during the growing stage will result in yield loss due to inadequate foliage. A necessity for supporting tuber growth.**



Remember...

- **“Mowing down volunteers early in your green manure rotational crops, stops the march, and saves the commercial crop!!”**