

Watch out for Injury to Vegetable Crops from Corn Herbicides

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Many vegetable crops are very sensitive to herbicides used in field and sweet corn crops. Herbicides that contain dicamba (Banvel, Distinct, Marksman, NorthStar, Yukon), 2,4-D (Shotgun), and mesotrione (Callisto, Camix, Halex, Lexar, Lumax), are particularly troublesome. Damage has been seen both from drift of these herbicides or because spray tanks were improperly cleaned out before application of pesticides to vegetables. Dicamba and 2,4-D are plant growth regulators which cause leaf cupping, twisting, and death. In one case, an entire field of cabbage was lost because damaged plants did not form marketable heads. I've seen damage to both peas and cole crops from mesotrione. Leaves of the susceptible plants turned white or had white blotches on them. In one recent case, young seedlings were completely killed from spray drift that moved across a 20 ft wide hedge row and then 30 ft or more into the adjoining vegetable field.

Vegetable growers should inform their neighbors who grow corn of the risk from these herbicides. Buffers of 50 to 100 ft are recommended. Avoid spraying when conditions are favorable for atmospheric inversion or wind drift. Spray when wind is moving away from sensitive crops, use larger droplets, lower boom heights, and lower pressures. For more info on reducing pesticide drift, see: <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/ent/faculty/landers/pestapp/>

It's always best not to use the same spray equipment on sensitive crops. However, where this is necessary, proper clean out of the spray tank is a must. Read the product labels for details on sprayer clean out.