

Colorado Growers Increase Onion Root Growth, Size, and Experience Longer Onion Storage



“In the past, we’ve stored onions for 30 to 45 days, but since we’ve used TRIGGRR[®], we can get another 30 days of storage,” says Russ Dionisio, Jr. Russ poses here at his farm, Dionisio Farms, in Pueblo, Colorado.

Most onion growers are not strangers to thrips, the vectors for Iris Yellow Spot Virus; the presence particularly has been noticeable in the western United States.

Findings from Colorado State University Extension, for example, note the presence of Iris Yellow Spot Virus beginning back in September 2001. Onion fields, in particular, have been monitored by CSU since 2002, with the CSU advising growers to practice tougher pest management.

The focus on increasing onion plant vigor is one way that growers such as Schnorr Farms, located near Fort Collins, Colorado, have built disease resistance within their onions. Passed on from grandfather to father, and now to son, Chris Schnorr, the family-run farm consists of 2,000 acres, including corn, sugar beets, alfalfa and wheat, as well as 100 acres of Foliar TRIGGRR[®]-treated onions.

Chris comments on Foliar TRIGGRR[®], and the results he saw on his red, white and yellow onions: “They sized better, and the plant health was a lot better. With Foliar TRIGGRR[®], I didn’t see as many pressures from the other diseases. I did a double application of Foliar TRIGGRR[®] by accident, and we saw pretty good results in how the leaves stayed healthy — not nearly as much thrips pressure and not as much Iris Yellow Spot.”

In addition to resistance from thrips, Chris also discusses the effect Foliar TRIGGRR[®] had on his red onions’ roots: “We had really good root structure,” says Chris, who was first introduced to Soil and Foliar TRIGGRR[®] in 2006.

“They were a nice, bright color red, a good root system and healthy crops,” says Chris of his onions. “Foliar TRIGGRR[®] increases root growth, so you have a larger root system and a larger crown which results in the larger-sized onions, as Chris found,” explains Dr. Larry Parker, Westbridge Director of Research & Development, who received his Ph.D. from Colorado State University in Agronomy with a specialty in Soil Microbiology.

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“With Foliar TRIGGRR[®],” continues, Dr. Parker, “You have less stress and a vigorous plant that becomes more resistant to insects and fungal diseases – this allows more energy to fill the onion bulb.”

Russ Dionisio, Jr., of Dionisio Farms in Pueblo, Colorado, is another onion grower who has seen the benefits of TRIGGRR[®] — specifically Soil TRIGGRR[®] — on his onion crop.

A family-run farm which began 45 years ago with Russ’ grandfather’s 10 acres, Dionisio Farms now covers 700 acres of not only onions, but also pumpkins, watermelon and cabbage. Russ began using Soil TRIGGRR[®] in 2007, and he has noticed the tremendous benefits that Soil TRIGGRR[®] has on onion storage.

“We store out our onions, and they store better with Soil TRIGGRR[®],” says Russ. “In the past, we’ve stored onions for 30 to 45 days, but since we’ve used TRIGGRR[®], we can get another 30 days of storage. That is a big deal, particularly during the winter time.”

And for growers that are taking more aggressive methods against thrips, the use of Westbridge’s BioLink[®] Insect Repellent along with a pesticide program has also proven effective for onion growers.

“The advantage of using BioLink[®] Insect Repellent is that it acts as a synergist, and helps get the pesticide into the insect so you get a more effective kill,” explains Dr. Parker.



The photo shows red onions from Schnorr Farms. They were all TRIGGRR[®]-treated, and were not stressed from Iris Yellow Spot Virus, nor do they show signs of Iris Yellow Spot Virus.

In the meantime, following success with Foliar TRIGGRR[®] on their onions, Schnorr Farms is currently applying Foliar TRIGGRR[®] for the first time on their first-cutting of alfalfa. Future plans include incorporating Foliar TRIGGRR[®] into 100 acres of sugar beets.

Along with TRIGGRR[®], Westbridge manufactures BioLink[®], a line of organic products, as well as a line of specialty fertilizers under the SUNBurst brand name. Many conventional growers have incorporated Westbridge’s BioLink products into their fertilizer program to grow better quality fruits and vegetables.

To find out more about Westbridge Agricultural Products, call (800) 876-2767 or visit their website at www.westbridge.com.

—Reporting by V.B.Segall