

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Common pests and diseases: Spinach

When growing vegetables, it is always exciting to care for the plant throughout its growing phase and then harvest it for delicious recipes later on, but one thing to watch out for is pests and diseases. Different plants are susceptible to different types of pests and diseases, and it is important to make yourself aware so you can keep a watchful eye and also take any preventative methods to keep your plants safe throughout their lifespan.

Spinach can fall victim to several different pests and diseases.

Pests:

The most common pests affecting all different types of greens, spinach included, is the aphid or the leafhopper. Aphids and leafhoppers both can easily spread diseases amongst plants.

Aphids are small, soft-bodied insects and they come in colors green, yellow or purple. Leafhoppers will be green-yellow and small. If you notice either of these pests on your greens, spray them with an insecticidal soap every 10 days to discourage them. To help prevent an infestation, continuously weed your greens because unwelcome weeds may serve as the home to leafhoppers.

Another common insect problem comes from leaf miners. These insects feed mostly on spinach, but also on chard, beet and turnip greens. The larvae tunnel between the leaves' tissue, and it causes tan-colored splotches on the leaves' surfaces. Cover your crops with screens to control this pest.



[Spinach seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

Diseases:

Some of the most common diseases affecting spinach plants include anthracnose, damping off, downy mildew and fusarium wilt.

Anthracnose will cause small, water-soaked spots on leaves which can become enlarged. If the infection is severe, it may cause severe blighting. To prevent this problem, only plant disease-free seed and avoid overhead watering.

Damping off will cause poor germination rate, new seedlings can die, plants can become yellow and appear stunted and older plants may wilt and collapse. This is often spread by overwatering plants. To manage this disease, plant spinach in well-draining soils and avoid overwatering.

Downy mildew will cause yellow spots that become larger over time and also become tan. A purple fungal growth will be present on the undersides of the leaves. Leaves can



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become curled or distorted. To manage this disease, plant varieties that are resistant and be sure to apply the appropriate fungicides upon planting to protect your spinach.

Fusarium wilt will cause older leaves to become yellow, plants may reach maturity too early or die early, and there may be a reduced seed production. For seedlings, the symptoms may appear similar to damping off. To manage this, don't plant spinach in the soil that is infested with fusarium, and be sure to practice crop rotation. Plant early and avoid overwatering during flowering stages.

You can find spinach seeds on our website at ufseeds.com!



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