

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Common pests and diseases: Fennel

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.

Fennel can fall victim to several different pests and diseases.



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

Pests:

Aphids, the armyworm and cutworms can be pests that wreak havoc on the fennel plants. Aphids are soft-bodied insects that bring problems to lots of plants. They create discoloration of the leaves, necrotic spots and stunted growth. Use tolerant varieties and only apply insecticides if there's a high infestation. Encourage lady bugs in your garden to eat the aphids.

The armyworm's larvae feed heavily on fennel and create skeletonized leaves. Fruit will show shallow, dry wounds. To control these pests, apply *Bacillus thuringiensis*.

Cutworms will attack plants and then the stems of the young seedlings, or plants that have been recently transplanted, may become severed at the soil line. If the plant is older when the cutworms arrive, there may be irregular holes eaten into the fruit. The larvae are usually only active at night. To prevent this, remove crop debris after harvest and apply a foil collar over the

plant's stem up to 3 inches above the soil line.

Diseases:

Some of the common diseases affecting fennel include *Cercospora* leaf blight, downy mildew, powdery mildew and rust.

Cercospora leaf blight creates necrotic flecks on the leaves, which will then develop a chlorotic halo and become brown. The lesions will cause the leaves to wither, curl and die. To manage this disease, only plant pathogen-free seeds, rotate crops every year and be sure to plow any crop debris into the soil after you harvest the crops. If necessary, apply fungicide sprays.

Downy mildew causes yellow spots on the tops of the leaves and a white growth on the undersides of the leaves. This disease mostly affects younger plants and is spread by leaves that are consistently wet. To prevent this, be sure not to plant the fennel



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too close together to allow for good air circulation. Also, utilize crop rotation.

Powdery mildew causes a powder-like growth on the leaves, and the leaves will then become chlorotic. This disease sometimes causes flowers to be distorted. To treat, plant tolerant species and avoid too much fertilizing.

Rust is a green discoloration on the leaves which can then become chlorotic. The plant may then be stunted, and the stems can become distorted or bend. Be sure to plant the fennel in soil that drains well, and apply a fungicide.

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



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