

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Common pests and diseases: Currants

When growing fruits and 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.

Currants can fall victim to several different pests and diseases.

Pests:

Some of the most common pests affecting currants include birds, aphids and big bud mites.

Birds will completely destroy the plant's developing fruit and the only tried and true way to prevent birds from completely ridding your plants of the currants is to cover the plants with a fruit cage.

Aphids are small insects that target the plant by sucking the liquid out of the new shoots. This will weaken the bush as a whole. The aphids also create a sticky liquid that covers the leaves. This sticky liquid then attracts other pests and insects. Although it is rare for aphids to kill the currant bush, they can decrease the amount of fruit produced by a substantial amount. Aphids will typically occur on the bushes from late April to May. Treat the aphids at the first sign of infection by spraying them.

A big bud mite is a pest that almost exclusively affects currant plants. When buds



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begin to form in the late winter, the affected buds will become much larger and fall from the plant. There is no cure, just wait for the harvest season, harvest whatever is produced and then dig up the plant and burn it.

Diseases:

Some of the most common diseases affecting currants include anthracnose, leaf spot, powdery mildew and more.

Anthracnose is a fungus infection that will cause dark brown or black dots on the surfaces of the currant's leaves. This infection may occur at any time during the growing season, and the spots will enlarge. Infected leaves can turn yellow and then drop from the plant. The dropping leaves can weaken the plant and may result in smaller fruit of a worse quality.

Leaf spot will cause larger spots than anthracnose, and it will normally occur in June. Small black specks will scatter across the leaves. The infected leaves will turn



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yellow and drop off the plant.

Powdery mildew will cause white patches of fungus on the lower parts of the plant and then they will occur on the branches, leaves and fruits. This can cause stunting and lower fruit production. Plant resistant varieties to decrease the likelihood of this affecting your plants.



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