

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Common pests and diseases: Peppers

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.

Peppers can fall victim to several different pests and diseases.



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

Pests:

Some of the common pests affecting pepper plants include aphids, the beet armyworm, the Colorado potato beetle and leafminers.

Aphids will be soft-bodied insects usually showing up on the undersides of the leaves. They will be green or yellow in color. The aphids secrete a sticky substance which can cause mold. Knock the aphids off the leaves with a jet of water. Only use insecticides if the infestation is out of control.

The beet armyworm will cause singular or multiple group holes in the foliage of the plant. Apply *Bacillus thuringiensis* and encourage natural enemies.

The Colorado potato beetle can cause complete defoliation if the infestation is bad enough. The adult beetle will emerge in the spring, and they can lay eggs in up to two dozens at a time. The eggs are laid on the undersides of the leaves. Most of these beetles have insecticide resistance, but if you

plant early-maturing peppers, they may escape damage. Spinosad is effective against the adult beetles.

Leafminers can create white splotches on the leaves and the leaves will fall off the plant. If the leafminers infect the plant when it is young, it can reduce the plant's yield. Remove plant debris from the soil immediately after harvest to prevent this, and use insecticides once the damage is identified.

Diseases:

Some of the common diseases affecting pepper plants include Anthracnose and *Cercospora* leaf spot.

Anthracnose causes circular lesions on the fruit, and sometimes these lesions can expand to cover the entire fruit's surface. Plant disease-free seed and treat seeds with hot water prior to planting. Practice crop rotation and make sure you plow all crop



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debris into the soil after harvest to help prevent inoculum in the soil. Anthracnose is found in most vegetable-growing areas and can cause large losses to crops if untreated.

Cecospora leaf spot causes small, circular and water-soaked spots on the leaves' surface. The lesions expand and sometimes can become brittle and crack. This is mainly an issue in more tropical areas, such as Africa, Asia and the West Indies. To manage this disease in peppers, remove all crop debris after harvest, apply the appropriate fungicides and practice crop rotation.

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



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