URBAN FARMER

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Common pests and diseases: Peanuts

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.

Peanuts can fall victim to several pests and diseases.

Pests:

Some common pests affecting peanuts include armyworms, thrips and the velvetbean caterpillar.

Armyworms will cause singular or multiple closely group holes in the foliage of the plant. Apply Bacillus thuringiensis and encourage natural enemies.

Thrips will create discolored leaves and scarring, and affected plants may look silver in color. To prevent this, don't plant near grain fields. Overhead watering may help reduce the thrips. Apply insecticides once you identify the damage as that of a thrip.

Onion maggots will cause seedlings to be stunted or wilt.

The velvetbean caterpillar's larvae will cause damage to the plant by eating holes in the leaves. Older larvae skeletonize the leaves and the later-stage larvae eats the rest of the leaf. Moths will lay the eggs on the



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undersides of the leaves. To prevent these larvae, encourage natural predators and utilize either early or late crop planting to avoid insect infestation.

Diseases:

Some of the common diseases affecting peanuts include Botrytis blight, charcoal rot, early leaf spot and more.

Botrytis blight causes the plant to show numerous spots on the upper parts of the leaves, and the entire plant or large portions may wilt and then die. The plant's pods and stems may become covered in fungal sclerotia. This disease will emerge in wet weather and high temperatures. To prevent this disease, plant early to avoid frost and apply the appropriate fungicides.

Charcoal rot causes the plant to have water-soaked lesions on the stems of seedlings close to the soil line, and if the lesions girdle the stem, the plants will wilt and die. To prevent this disease, practice









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crop rotation and properly water and fertilize your plants.

Early leaf spot causes the plant to show chlorotic flecks on the leaf petioles, which can enlarge and become dark. This disease is more likely to emerge in high humidity and warm temperatures. It is more likely to spread if there is prolonged leaf wetness. To prevent this disease, plow crop debris into the soil after the harvest.

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