

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Common pests and diseases: Onions

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.

Onions can fall victim to several different pests and diseases.

Pests:

Some of the pests affecting onions include leafminers, thrips and onion maggots.

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. Thrips will create discolored leaves and scarring, and affected plants may look silver in color. To prevent this, don't plant leeks or onion-related plants 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. If the infestation occurs while the onions are in their bulbing phase, the bulbs will appear deformed and be susceptible to storage rot after harvest.



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

The onion maggot is a gray-colored fly that lays eggs around the base of the plant. The larvae, which come from the eggs, will bore into the onions. To prevent onion maggots, clean up all debris after harvest, and apply granular insecticides if necessary. Remove any wild onion or chives, because these can act as an infection source. Utilize floating row covers.

Diseases:

Some of the diseases affecting onions include Botrytis leaf blight, damping-off, black mold and more.

Botrytis leaf blight is a fungus that will create small, white lesions with green halos. Leaves may be blight if moisture is prevalent for a long time. The disease prefers high humidity and warm temperatures, and the fungus survives on crop debris or in the soil. Older leaves are more susceptible to blight. To prevent this disease, plant the onions with enough space in between them to allow for



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good air circulation. Apply fungicides when needed.

Damping-off will cause the seeds to rot, and there will be discolored root tips. The disease prefers moist or wet soil, and the best way to prevent this disease from occurring is to plant only disease-free seed and treat the seed with fungicides. You can also practice crop rotation.

Black mold will cause dark discoloration near the neck of the plant and black streaks under the outer dry scales. To prevent this from happening, apply proper fungicides to the seeds prior to planting and store the onions in temperatures below 59 degrees. If you come in contact with black mold, make sure you wash your hands thoroughly.

You can find onion seeds and bulbs on our website at ufseeds.com!



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