

# URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

## Common pests and diseases: Peas

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.

Peas can fall victim to several pests and diseases.

### Pests:

Some of the common pests affecting pea plants include aphids, leafminers and the Mexican bean beetle.

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.

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.

The Mexican bean beetle will cause irregular groups of feeding on the bottom of the leaves, which causes the top surface



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of the leaf to dry out. Brush the eggs off the leaves and apply an insecticidal soap.

### Diseases:

Some of the common diseases affecting peas include brown spot, downy mildew, fusarium root rot and gray mold.

Brown spot will cause water-soaked spots on the leaves, and after a few days the lesions turn tan and resemble a scorch instead of a water-soaked spot. Leaves experiencing this may dry and drop from the plant. To manage this issue, plant only disease-free seeds, rotate crops and don't plant peas in the fall.

Downy mildew will cause yellow or brown blotches on the tops of the leaves and a fluffy-white growth on the bottom. The plant may be stunted or distorted, and the whole plant may even die. To avoid this problem, practice crop rotation, plow the crop debris into the soil and don't plant



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peas in late August.

Fusarium root rot causes the plant to yellow, have stunted growth and have dark streaks on the roots. There are no resistant varieties yet, so practice crop rotation and apply appropriate fungicides prior to planting.

Gray mold will cause fuzzy gray lesions on the stem, which can girdle the stem and cause the entire plant to wilt. Lower leaves may also be covered in the fuzzy gray lesions and can shrivel. A potassium deficiency may make plants more resistant to this disease. To prevent the disease, apply the appropriate fungicides if the plant begins flowering in wet weather.

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