

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

What went wrong: Poor yield

Since each different vegetable plant varies from the next, poor yields can have many different causes depending on what kind of vegetable you are growing. A symptom of low yields may be the vegetable plant is producing flowers but never leads to producing fruit.

Sunlight:

Since vegetables require full sun - at least six to eight hours each day - it's possible your low yields are simply because your plant is not getting enough sun. However, if you are certain the plant is receiving plenty of sun, there are several other problems that can cause low plant yields.

Inadequate pollination:

To produce a fruit for your harvest, the plant's flowers must be pollinated. For the plant to grow fruit, the pollen is transferred from the male part of the flower to the female part of the flower. If they are not pollinated, the female flowers will not set seeds and produce the vegetables you were hoping for. Lack of pollination has many causes:

Not enough wind:

Different vegetables are pollinated in different ways, but in some cases, wind will play a part. For example, corn is pollinated by wind moving pollen from the male flower to the female flower. The male part, tassels, and the female part, what turns into the ear of corn, are on the same plant. TO encourage pollination in your corn plants, plant them in three or four rows with the plants side by



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side. Sometimes, you can walk among the rows and shake the stalk so the pollination will fall.

Temperature problems:

Plants such as tomatoes and peppers are picky about the temperature they require in order to pollinate. If the temps fall below 55 degrees Fahrenheit while these plants are flowering, it can damage the pollen and then prevent fruiting from occurring. Too much rain, too much humidity and too many days with temperatures higher than 75 degrees Fahrenheit also can prevent fruiting. Since gardeners don't have control over the weather, they can encourage pollination in the less-than-ideal conditions by gently shaking the plant.

Lack of pollinators:

A common cause of inadequate pollination is lack of the good insects and pollinators that can pollinate your plants for you.



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Vegetables with separate male and female flowers require insects, like bees, to pollinate the flowers. These vegetables are plants such as squash, pumpkins and honeydew melons. If attracting pollinators is not possible, you can hand pollinate your plants by locating the male flower, which is typically smaller on a thin stem near the plant's base, and break the flower off, peel the petals back and transfer pollen to the female flower by brushing the flowers together. If this isn't something you want to do, try to attract more pollinators by not using insecticides and also planting more native flowers near your garden.



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