

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Common pests and diseases: Gourds

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.

Gourds can fall victim to several different pests and diseases.

Pests:

Some of the pests that can affect gourds include the squash vine borer and the Western striped cucumber beetle.

The squash vine borer will suddenly cause the plant to wilt. You will be able to see holes in the vines where the borer entered the plant. It will overwinter in the soil, so plow the plants into the soil after harvest and be sure to use insecticide once you realize the insect is present.

The Western striped cucumber beetle will feed on the plant's leaves, stems and blossoms, in which you will then see feeding damage. These insects can transmit bacterial wilt, and they also overwinter in the soil or in leaf litter. If you see any signs of the beetle, apply the appropriate insecticides.

Diseases:

Some of the common diseases gourds may struggle with include Alternaria leaf blight, anthracnose, Cercospora leaf spot, gummy



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stem blight and more.

Alternaria leaf blight will cause small brown or yellow spots with a halo on the plant's leaves. The lesions expand as the disease progresses and they will become larger. Leaves will curl and eventually die. This disease is more prevalent when grown in areas where temperatures are higher and rain occurs more frequently. To prevent this disease, be sure to rotate your crops frequently and remove crop debris after you harvest.

Anthrachnose will cause tan or brown lesions with darker spots on the insides of the lesions on the gourds' leaves, stems and fruit. The disease prefers warm weather, and to prevent this disease, only plant resistant varieties, use fungicides when necessary and rotate crops frequently.

Cercospora leaf spot will first affect older leaves, and as the disease progresses, the



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lesions will grow to cover larger areas. This is a fungus that mainly survives on plant debris and is spread by wind and water. It will occur in tropical areas. To prevent this from occurring, remove crop debris immediately after harvest.

Gummy stem blight is a disease that will cause a v-shaped yellow or brown areas on the stem and the areas will then crack. To prevent this, use disease-free seeds and treat the seeds prior to planting. Also, practice crop rotation.

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



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