

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Common pests and diseases: Eggplants

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.

Eggplants can fall victim to several different pests and diseases.

Pests:

Common pests affecting eggplants are lace bugs and flea beetles. Others include tomato hornworms, mites, aphids and cutworms.

For gardeners trying to prevent bugs commonly affecting eggplants, the best way is to utilize floating row covers until the plants are old enough to withstand insect attacks. Once the plants are old enough, use an insecticidal soap to treat any bugs causing issues. Be sure to keep all weeds and debris to a minimum so insects don't overwinter, and utilize crop rotation. Introduce beneficial insects, such as lady bugs, into the garden because they will be predators to some of the insects causing harm to your plants.

Diseases:

In addition to various pests, diseases can also cause harm to your eggplant plants. Common diseases affecting eggplants include blossom end rot, bacterial wilt, verticium wilt, southern blight, Phomopsis



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blight and phytophthora blight.

Blossom end rot, which also commonly affects tomatoes, is caused by a fungus due to the gardener overwatering. This disease affects ripe fruit and causes leather-like sunken spots to appear on the fruit ends and cause the fruit to drop.

Bacterial wilt causes plants to droop suddenly, from the bottom up, and turn yellow.

Southern blight is caused by a fungus and plants will show a crown softening and mold also may appear on the plant and in the soil nearby.

Phomopsis blight affects the fruit, which will form sunken spots that get bigger and become soft or spongy.

Phytophthora blight, also commonly affecting peppers, can kill an eggplant quickly. Plants



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will have dark streaks, and they will collapse and die. This disease is common in wetter areas, with a soil temperature of between 75 and 85 degrees. There's no way to cure this disease so be sure prevention is utilized. Increasing drainage can help prevent the problem, and this can be done by planting eggplants in a raised bed. Be sure not to overwater.

There are several ways to prevent the above diseases from destroying your crops. Eliminate the problem by practicing good crop rotation, keep weeds out of the garden and leaving plenty of space between plants for good air circulation and correct watering.

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