

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Common pests and diseases: Gooseberries

When growing fruits and 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.

Gooseberries can fall victim to several different pests and diseases.

Pests:

Some of the most common pests affecting gooseberries are aphids, currant borers and stinkbugs.

Aphids are small, soft bodied insects which will affect the undersides of the leaves or the stems. If the infestation becomes bad enough, they will cause leaves to become yellow or distorted. Shoots can become stunted. The aphids also create a sticky liquid that covers the leaves. This sticky liquid then attracts other pests and insects. Although it is rare for aphids to kill the plant, they can decrease the amount of fruit produced by a substantial amount. Aphids will typically occur on the bushes from late April to May. Treat the aphids at the first sign of infestation by spraying them.

Currant borers will cause yellow and withered leaves, and the canes may even die. To manage this infestation, prune the damaged canes and destroy them. Apply the insecticides before the larvae enter the cane in order for them to be effective.



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Stinkbugs can carry pathogens and cause other infections if they feed on the plant. To manage these pests, control the weeds around the plants and use insecticidal soaps.

Diseases:

Some of the most common diseases infecting gooseberries is American gooseberry mildew, anthracnose and Septoria leaf spot.

American gooseberry mildew causes white, powdery patches on the plant's younger leaves, stems or branches. These can kill patches of the plant. White patches also may appear on the fruit. To manage this disease, reduce humidity around the plants and keep the area free of weeds.

Anthracnose will cause brown or black lesions on leaves which can develop and then cause the leaves to drop from the plant. Berries can split and also drop from the plant. To manage this, remove leaf debris from around the plant and also apply the appropriate fungicides when necessary.



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Septoria leaf spot will cause symptoms very similar to anthracnose, but the lesions will develop a lighter center and the leaves will then drop from the plant. This fungus survives on leaf debris on the ground, so remove debris, weed around the plants and provide adequate plant spacing. You also can apply certain fungicides when needed.



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