**Vegetable Woes-Pests & Pathogens**

Summer is a time of sunshine, beauty and fresh vegetables. It’s also a time when plant pest populations proliferate, putting your plant’s health in jeopardy. It is very important during the summer months to keep a close watch over your vegetable garden for any signs of insect and disease problems. The earlier you detect plant pests the easier it will be to prevent a problem from spreading out of control. Here are a few common summer pests that you will likely encounter this growing season.

### Squash Vine Borer

The squash vine borer is the juvenile stage of a clear wing moth. In the spring these adult moths emerge from the soil and deposit eggs on the stem of a host plant. When the eggs hatch, the larvae burrow into the stem of a host plant, like squash. The burrowing destroys the plant’s vascular tissue and disrupts water movement, which results in excessive wilting. If your squash plant is wilting, look down at the base of the plant for a borer entrance hole. If your plant is affected it is unlikely to recover from borer damage. Control includes physically blocking adult squash vine borers from your plants using a floating row cover. Just be sure to remove the cover during pollination. Insecticides are not effective once the borer has entered the stem of the plant, however they can prevent the adult moths from laying eggs. The key to control is prevention and early detection.

### Squash Bugs

The squash bug is the most serious pest of squash that cause damage by sucking plant juices from leaves. As they feed, the squash bug injects a toxin that causes the plant to wilt, blacken and dieback. This dieback is often referred to as anasa wilt. When scouting your squash plants look on the underside of leaves for nymphs and eggs which are easier to control than adults. If only a few plants are affected, it is most effective to hand pick and destroy squash bugs and eggs. If populations are too high to control by hand, insecticides can be used, but are most effective on young nymphs. Other options for control include planting varieties such as butternut and acorn squash, which show some resistance.

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**Eat Local**

- **Plum Tree Market Place**
  - Open April 8 – November 4
  This market is located on S. George Street, between Walnut and Chestnut Streets. Hours of operation are Fridays from 4PM-7PM. Market specializes in local and pesticide free produce.

- **Mini Mobile Market**
  - Opens June 1st
  This market is located behind Herman Park Center. Hours of operation are Wednesdays from 9:30AM-2:30PM. Market specializes in local produce. Market is sponsored by Wayne Co. Health Department.

- **Berkeley Farmer’s Market**
  - Now Open Saturdays
  This market is located at the Berkeley Mall off of Mall Road, in the JC Penney’s parking lot. Hours of operation are Saturdays from 10AM-2:30PM. Market specializes in crafts and local produce.
Diseases

**Powdery Mildew**

This is a disease caused by several closely related fungi, which attack many different types of plants. Powdery mildew, just as its name implies, appears as a powdery mat on the surface of leaves, stems and flower petals. Although this disease is not considered to be fatal, plant damage can occur when the infestation is severe. It favors high humidity and spreads via wind and splashing water. The fungus survives the winter attached to plant parts and plant debris such as fallen leaves. The first step to controlling powdery mildew is by ensuring that you have healthy plants in your garden. Cucurbit vegetables such as squash, cucumbers, and pumpkins are extremely susceptible. If you find leaves with powdery mildew simply remove and destroy them. Prune out infected stems and remove fallen leaves to help prevent spread and reinfection. Use approved fungicides as needed. Avoid overhead irrigation.

**Southern Bacterial Wilt**

Bacterial wilt is a disease caused by *Ralstonia solanacearum*, which is found in the soil and is often a problem in areas repeatedly planted in tomato, potato, tobacco, eggplant, and pepper. Symptoms include an initial wilt in young leaves during the heat of the day that recover at night, followed by a rapid and permanent wilt of the whole plant. Infected stems will have brown discoloration in the vascular tissue near the crown and root system. Currently there are no resistant cultivars available. Remove wilted plants and burn them to reduce the spread of the disease. Gardeners are encouraged to rotate tomatoes with non-solanaceous plants, avoid damaging plant roots during transplanting, and only use disease-free transplants.

We are pleased to be able to provide you this educational information.

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