

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Common pests and diseases: Beets

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.

Beets can fall victim to several different pests and diseases.

Pests:

One of the pests that affects beets is the beet cyst nematode. Symptoms vary depending on when the beet is affected. If a seedling is infected, it will show stunted growth and less leaf growth. Older plants do not show as many symptoms. Below the soil, the roots will look stunted and exhibit lots of secondary roots. To prevent nematodes, weed the area around the beets well, and plow deeply in the summer.

Darkling beetles are a pest that will feed on the beet's stems, which will then show damage. This can cause seedlings to die. These beetles are typically most active during the night and will hide during the day. To prevent these beetles, remove the weeds from the field's borders and apply the correct insecticides, which will typically be in the form of baits.

Leafminers are a pest that will leave white spots on the leaves, and this can result in the leaves dropping off the plant. To help



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prevent these, remove the plants from the soil immediately after you harvest them.

Diseases:

One common disease affecting beets is bacterial blight. When beets are infected with this disease, the leaves will show irregular-shaped spots with dark centers and black borders. Sometimes, the edges of the leaves may appear water-soaked. Later, the leaves will turn yellow and necrotic. The spots can even grow and join together and cause the leaf to dry and then fall off the plant. The bacteria is spread usually by rainfall or by insect injuries. This disease can also affect beans, eggplants, lettuce and peppers. The best way to manage this disease is by ensuring your seeds are disease-free.

Another common disease is called scab, and this causes round spots on roots that grow and turn brown and then rupture the epidermis. This disease is more common among dry conditions, and the best way to



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prevent this disease is to avoid planting in soil that is infected and also avoid rotating beets in the same area as potatoes.

Beet western yellow virus also affects beets. Its symptoms are older leaves will begin to show yellowing, and then possibly show small reddish-brown spots. Leaves will then grow thick, leather-like and brittle. This virus is transmitted by aphids, so be sure to control any aphid problems near your beets.

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



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