

PEST MANAGEMENT

COMMON GARDEN PESTS



Aphids

green, pinhead-sized,
usually in clusters



Cucumber Beetles

yellow with black stripes,
1/5 in long



Flea Beetles

black or brown, jumpy,
pinhead-sized



Squash Bugs

gray and angular body
red or orange eggs,
dime-sized

HOW TO PREVENT THEM

CROP ROTATION: Rotate crops so you do not plant species from the same scientific family in the same areas of your garden from season to season. For example, avoid planting tomatoes in the same area where you grew peppers the season before. Pests sometimes remain dormant in the soil from previous seasons and planting crops with similar qualities can increase vulnerability to these pests.

COMPANION PLANTS: Planting these complementary plants next to each other can have dual benefits. Some companion plants can attract beneficial insects, such as pollinators, and at the same time discourage harmful insects.

COMPOST TEA: Applying compost tea to your plants is like giving your plants a probiotic. It boosts the strength of your plant's immune system and allows your plants to be more resilient to invasion. To maximize the pest prevention properties of compost tea, you can spray it on the leaves of your plant. The beneficial microbes that are abundant in compost tea help your plant's immune system attack harmful microbes and diseases.

CITY of BOSTON



tomato and
basil are
companion
plants



GrowBoston

growboston@boston.gov

HOW TO MANAGE THEM

ATTRACT THEIR PREDATORS: Plants that attract beneficial insects, such as ladybugs, praying mantises, and parasitic wasps can be highly effective at managing pests. These insects prey on larvae and adult garden pests and help reduce the population of harmful insects. Gardens with a variety of plants, including shrubs, turf grasses, and particularly plants that flower throughout the season, can help increase the population of beneficial insects in your garden.

APPLY ROW COVER: This polyester mesh fabric is especially effective at protecting plants from mobile pests, such as beetles and moths. Use lighter row cover material in the spring and summer to maintain air circulation and balanced temperatures amongst the plants. In the winter, use a thicker row cover to insulate the plants.

HAND-PICK THEM: Try to monitor for pests on a weekly basis. If you are watchful of pests early in the season, physical removal of pests can be an effective management method that extends the life of your plants. This would simply involve removing squash bugs, cut worms, and cucumber beetles and their eggs from your plants and dropping them in soapy water, which is toxic to many insects.



NATURAL PEST SPRAY RECIPE

Ingredients:

- 1 garlic bulb
- 1 small onion
- 1 tsp of cayenne powder
- 1 qt of water
- 1 tbsp liquid dish soap
- 1 clean spray bottle
- 1 cheese cloth

Chop or grind onion and garlic. Then add water and mix in the cayenne powder. Steep for one hour and strain mixture using cheese cloth. Add liquid dish soap. Thoroughly spray the leaves of your plants, including the undersides. Store the mixture in a sealed container and keep in the fridge for up to a week.

Sources: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, NYC Parks GreenThumb, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Penn State Extension, UMass Extension Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment. Illustrations by Olivia Golden