

P.O. Box 278
Emory, TX 75440
(903) 473-4580

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To: Rains County Leader

From: Stephen Gowin
CEA-Ag, Rains County

Cucurbit Problems

Many home gardeners have been calling here lately about problems with squash and cucumber plants. Both are a very popular garden plant in this area and in most cases grow very well. Much of the problem right now is because we are having too much rain. Listed below are some questions that I have been receiving and the answers that follow.

Q. Why are my leaves on both squash and cucumbers curled under and the fruit is discolored?



A. Cucumber Mosaic

Symptoms:

A virus distributed worldwide, affecting most cucurbits but rarely affecting watermelon. New growth is cupped downward, and leaves are severely mottled with alternating light green and dark green patches. Plants are stunted, and fruits are covered with bumpy protrusions. Severely affected cucumber fruit may be almost entirely white.

Control:

The virus is readily transferred by aphids and survives on a wide variety of plants. Varietal resistance is the primary management tool, and eliminating weeds and infected perennial ornamentals that may harbor the virus is critical.

Q. Why does the end of the fruit turn brown and quickly falls off?



A. Poor Pollination Insufficient or inactive pollen

Symptoms:

Fruit fail to expand normally, quickly turning brown at the blossom end and falling off the plant.

Control:

Most cucurbits have separate male and female flowers. Flower sex can be affected by plant age and environmental conditions. Some cultivars have only female flowers, and must have a pollinator line interplanted to insure normal fruit development. An adequate population of bees is also needed to insure pollination. Proper selection of insecticides for treating other pests is important to minimize adverse effects on the pollinators.



Q. What causes fruit to start rotting and it is growing white mold on it?

A. Choanephora Rot *Choanephora Cucurbitarum*

Symptoms:

Soft rotting fungus enters fruit from blossom end, rapidly developing a fluffy mass of fruiting bodies.

Control:

Cultural practices that reduce fruit contact with soil, or splashing of infected soil onto fruit are beneficial. Fungicide sprays may be required.

If you are having problems with you Cucurbits feel free to give me a call. You can also go to the following website which is an excellent resource <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/problem-solvers/cucurbit-problem-solver/>.