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# virginia home food production



## FACT SHEET

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MH 360

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

### GENERAL DIAGNOSTIC GUIDE

| Symptoms                           | Possible Causes              | Possible Cures   |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Dying young plants                 | Fertilizer burn              | Mix fertilizer thoroughly with soil. Use less fertilizer or incorporate more evenly in soil.   |
|                                    | Disease (damping-off)        | Avoid overwatering. Apply water in the forenoon. Select well-drained garden sites.             |
| Stunted plants<br>(pale to yellow) | Low soil fertility           | Add 2-3 lbs. of fertilizer for 100 sq. ft.   |
|                                    | Poor soil drainage           | Add organic matter and improve drainage.   |
|                                    | Shallow or compacted soil    | Plow deeper. Add organic matter.   |
|                                    | Insects or diseases          | Identify the insect or disease and use currently recommended control measures.                 |
| Stunted plants<br>(purplish color) | Low temperatures             | Wait for warm weather; protect from frost.   |
|                                    | Lack of phosphorus           | Add phosphorus fertilizer.   |
| Wilting plants                     | Dry soil                     | Apply water if possible.   |
|                                    | Excess water in soil         | Dig ditches to drain surface water away.   |
|                                    | Disease, fungus or nematodes | Use resistant varieties if possible or recommended control measures. Consider soil fumigation. |
| Weak, spindly plants               | Too much shade               | Move garden to sunny location.   |
|                                    | Too much water               | Make ditches.  |
|                                    | Plants too thick             | Thin your plants.  |
|                                    | Too much nitrogen            | Avoid excess nitrogen fertilization.   |

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| Symptoms   | Possible Causes                 | Possible Cures   |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Holes in leaves  | Insects                         | Identify the insect and use recommended control measures.  |
|  | Hail                            | Be thankful it was not worse. Some vegetables will recover depending upon amount of damage and stage of growth when damage occurs.                                 |
| Spots, molds<br>darkened areas on<br>leaves and stems        | Disease                         | Identify disease. Use recommended control measures to reduce damage. Consider resistant varieties for next crop.   |
|  | Fertilizer burn                 | Wash plants if fertilizer comes in contact with leaves. Keep fertilizer off plants.  |
| Failure to set fruit   | High temperatures               | Fruit set will improve as weather cools.   |
|  | Low temperatures                | Protect from freezing.   |
|  | Insects                         | Identify the insect and use controls.  |
| Tomato leaf curl   | Stress                          | May not damage plants severely. Protect fruits from sunscald.  |
|  | Disease                         | Identify the disease and use recommended controls. Consider resistant varieties for next crop.   |
| Dry, brown to black<br>rot on blossom end<br>of tomato fruit | Extremely dry<br>weather        | Maintain an even watering level. (1-2" of water per week.) Have the soil tested to determine lime needed to prevent problem.                                       |
| Misshapen tomatoes<br>(catfacing)                            | Cool weather during<br>blooming | Choose a different tomato variety for next summer.   |
| Fruit rots   | Disease                         | Protect the foliage and fruits with recommended fungicides. Stake the vines to avoid contact with the soil.  |
| Abnormal leaves and<br>growth                                | 2,4-D weed killer               | Don't use sprayer that has previously applied 2,4-D. Don't allow spray to drift on garden. Plants will recover; fruiting delay of 2-3 weeks depending upon damage. |
|  | Virus disease                   | Remove infected plants to prevent spreading. Control insects that spread the disease. Identify the disease. Consider resistant varieties for next crop.            |
| Misshapen carrots,<br>beets, etc.                            | Plants too close<br>together    | Thin plants as early as possible.  |
|  | Nematodes                       | Rotate with resistant vegetables. Consider soil fumigation.  |
|  | Heavy or stoney soil            | Incorporate organic mater, remove stones.  |
| Disappearing<br>watermelons                                  | Neighbors' kids                 | Share melon in exchange for garden work.   |