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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 (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 (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 darkened areas on 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 rot on blossom end of tomato fruit	Extremely dry 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 (catfacing)	Cool weather during 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 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, beets, etc.	Plants too close 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 watermelons	Neighbors' kids	Share melon in exchange for garden work.