Many different factors cause vegetables to grow poorly or abnormally. Some of the more obvious problems are insect or disease related. But other problems can be related to environment, weather, nutrition, variety peculiarities - even animals and people.

Here are some common problems and corrective actions for specific vegetables, followed by a list of general problems that could affect any or all crops. When the problem is insect or disease related and may require a pesticide application for corrective action (indicated by ** in the chart below), the recommendation will be found in other bulletins published by UNH Cooperative Extension, or by calling Extension’s toll-free Family, Home and Garden Education Center Info Line at 1-877-398-4769. The Info Line is staffed weekdays between 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Possible Causes</th>
<th>Corrective Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asparagus</td>
<td>Tip of spear black</td>
<td>Frost</td>
<td>Remove affected spears.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tip of spear brown</td>
<td>Fusarium wilt</td>
<td>Remove affected spears and relocate asparagus bed to new location if yields are seriously reduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snap beans</td>
<td>Large, brown areas on leaves</td>
<td>Scorch caused by sun-light on wet leaves</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lima beans</td>
<td>Poor germination</td>
<td>Cool, wet soil</td>
<td>Plant no deeper than 1&quot;, when soil is at least 70°F.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edible soybeans</td>
<td>Late maturity</td>
<td>Long-season variety</td>
<td>Select variety with earlier maturity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beets</td>
<td>Poor germination</td>
<td>Crusted soil or seeded too deeply</td>
<td>Plant about 1/4&quot; deep and cover with light soil..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White areas or tunnels in leaves</td>
<td>Leaf miner (an insect)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cavities in sides of roots</td>
<td>Boron deficiency</td>
<td>Supply boron by adding manure or compost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>Very stunted plants</td>
<td>Plants exposed to sustained low temperatures before transplanting</td>
<td>Keep young plants above 60°F until planted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crop</td>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>Possible Causes</td>
<td>Corrective Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>Strong plant, but only “button” for a head</td>
<td>Plants chilled in garden by near freezing</td>
<td>Transplants after danger of frost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plants wilt during sunny days, even with</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sufficient water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Root maggots or clubroot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brussels sprouts</td>
<td>Bland flavor</td>
<td>Harvested too early</td>
<td>Harvest after first freeze.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>Very stunted plants or plants wilt</td>
<td>(see broccoli)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese cabbage</td>
<td>Going to seed</td>
<td>Planted too early</td>
<td>Plant about mid-July.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Poor germination</td>
<td>Crusted soil or seeded too deeply</td>
<td>Plant about 1/4” deep and cover with light soil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>Very stunted plants</td>
<td>(see broccoli)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heads not white</td>
<td>Head exposed to sun</td>
<td>When head begins to form, tie outer leaves over head with a rubber band or try a self-blanching variety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss Chard</td>
<td>Poor germination (see beets)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White areas in leaves</td>
<td>(see beets)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Corn</td>
<td>Yellow leaves</td>
<td>Dry weather and/or nitrogen deficiency</td>
<td>Add water and/or add nitrogen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumbers</td>
<td>Brown spots and/or jelly on fruits</td>
<td>Scab-caused by a fungus</td>
<td>Use resistant varieties and **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plants suddenly wilt</td>
<td>Bacterial wilt-spread by cucumber beetles</td>
<td>Control beetles and **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fruits with pointed ends</td>
<td>Lack of nitrogen and potassium</td>
<td>Add potassium and nitrogen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bitter fruits</td>
<td>Stunted growth due to dry weather or nutrient deficiency</td>
<td>Add water and/or fertilizer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
<td>Large plants but few fruits</td>
<td>Poor fruit set due to adverse weather or</td>
<td>Don’t plant extra early and don’t overfertilize with nitrogen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>excessive nitrogen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td>Bottom rot</td>
<td>Soilborne disease</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bitter flavor</td>
<td>Stunted growth, or going to seed</td>
<td>Add water and/or nitrogen, or harvest before going to seed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crop</td>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>Possible Causes</td>
<td>Corrective Action</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskmelon</td>
<td>Late maturity</td>
<td>Late season varieties or soil and weather</td>
<td>Use earlier variety and use black plastic mulch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plants suddenly wilt</td>
<td>Bacterial wilt-spread by cucumber beetles</td>
<td>Control beetles and **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onions</td>
<td>Plants fail to form bulbs</td>
<td>Lack of vigorous growth</td>
<td>Provide ample water and nitrogen. Grow only varieties recommended for the Northeast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsnips</td>
<td>Poor germination</td>
<td>Old seed (more than 1 year old)</td>
<td>Use fresh seed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bland flavor</td>
<td>Harvested too early</td>
<td>Harvest after first freeze, or mulch crop and harvest next spring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>Stunted growth and plant turns yellow, beginning at bottom</td>
<td>Root rot</td>
<td>Use resistant varieties and plant in well-drained, light soil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>Large plants but few fruits</td>
<td>Poor fruit set due to adverse weather or excessive nitrogen</td>
<td>Try hybrid varieties (and see eggplant).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Scab on tubers</td>
<td>pH too high</td>
<td>Plant in soil with a pH of 5.1 - 5.4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radish</td>
<td>Going to seed and no enlarged roots</td>
<td>High temperature</td>
<td>Plant earlier or in late summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhubarb</td>
<td>Seed stalk formation</td>
<td>Exact cause unknown</td>
<td>Remove seed stalks as they appear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinach</td>
<td>Going to seed</td>
<td>Long days and high temperature</td>
<td>Plant very early in spring or in late summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Squash</td>
<td>Young fruits rot (blossom end rot)</td>
<td>Fungus which thrives in wet blossoms</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>Catface (rough area on blossom end)</td>
<td>Low night temperature (below 60EF) during fruit set</td>
<td>Plant a little later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaf roll</td>
<td>Too much rain or very bright sun</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blossom end rot (brown leathery spot on blossom end of fruit)</td>
<td>Fluctuating soil moisture</td>
<td>Provide uniform moisture during entire season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brown or black spots on foliage that spread until infected leaves die</td>
<td>Early or late blight</td>
<td>Handpick affected leaves on a daily basis or **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# General Crop Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Possible Causes</th>
<th>Corrective Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor growth and stunted plants</td>
<td>Low pH and/or poor nutrition and weed competition.</td>
<td>Add lime and fertilizer according to soil test. Control weeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low temperature</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plant later or use soil warming methods such as black plastic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insects and diseases</td>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spindly plants</td>
<td>Too much nitrogen or plants growing in shade</td>
<td>Avoid excessive nitrogen, and plant in full sun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holes in leaves, yellowish or distorted leaves</td>
<td>Insects or diseases</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaves with white powdery covering or various spotty-brown, red, black</td>
<td>Diseases</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Original fact sheet by developed by Otho Wells. October, 2000 revision reviewed for technical accuracy by UNH Cooperative Extension Vegetable Specialist, David Kopsell.

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