

Cucurbit Diseases Observed in 2026 Season

Powdery Mildew: Observed on all Cucurbita pepo (Zucchini, Yellow Squash, Acorn Squash, Pumpkin, Ornamental Gourds, Spaghetti Squash, and Winter Squash) and C. moschata (Butternut squash). Rarely on C. maxima (Buttercup squash); Watermelon, cantaloupe, and muskmelon are immune. Appears as a white powder, typically late in the season. Can spread and kill extremely fast, but is generally responsive to fungicides. Preventative treatments are recommended during high-risk periods (cooler nights and frequent rains)

Alternaria Leaf Spot: Observed on Cucurmis sativus (Cucumbers), rarely on Cucurbita pepo. Begins as a round brown spot that can grow and kill entire leaves. Generally not lethal and responsive to most fungicides.

Anthrachnose: Observed on Citrullus melo (watermelon). Appears very late in the season, generally of minimal concern due to its late appearance. Symptoms are black-brown spots on leaves and stems.

Squash Potyviruses (Zucchini Yellow Mosaic Virus, Watermelon Mosaic Virus): Observed on all cucurbits except watermelon and muskmelons. Can cause a variety of symptoms, including distorted, misshapen leaves, dieback, reddening/bleaching of leaves, and distorted or mosaic fruit. While these viruses do not typically affect plant vigor much, they will cause fruit to not mature properly. These are vectored by aphids and can spread extremely quickly but are mostly limited to squashes as a host.

Fruit Rots: Various fruit rots were observed, including Fusarium, Choanephora, Alternaria and Cladosporium. These cause rot on immature fruit and are associated with excessively wet conditions. Seen on C. pepo, C. moschata, and C. maxima, cucumbers and muskmelons. These fungi are common soil fungi and have little to no in-season prevention. Promoting dry conditions throughout the season on flowers and fruits will reduce the impacts from these rots.

Watermelon Rind Necrosis: Observed on watermelons. While associated with various common bacteria, the exact cause of this disorder is not clear. Symptoms include small brown necrotic spots in the rind of mature watermelons.

Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus: Observed on Ornamental gourds only. Causes yellow spots and dieback of infected leaves. Vectored by thrips. Extremely broad host range which includes most vegetables and ornamentals. Not known to infect grasses. Overwinters in perennial weeds like clover and dandelions. Very concerning on solanaceous crops. Cucurbit crops even if infected are unlikely to play a role in disease spread.

Aster Yellows Phytoplasma: Observed on cucumber and yellow squash. Causes a variety of symptoms, including yellow/reddening of leaves, virescence (petals develop as leaves), and mosaic fruit. Vectored by leafhoppers. Nearly unlimited host range and regularly found in almost any plant, including coneflower, cauliflower, wheat, tomatoes, and more. There is no effective control for leafhoppers, rather reducing their preferred feeding environment by using weed paper and keeping weeds down will reduce the infection rates of crops.