



GARDENING PRACTICES TO CONTROL PROBLEMS

Many insect and disease problems can be prevented in your yard by following these gardening practices:

SELECT DISEASE RESISTANT VARIETIES

The best way to prevent disease problems is to plant varieties that have been bred to be resistant to, or tolerant of, specific diseases. Certain varieties of roses, for example, are resistant to powdery mildew. Tomato varieties have been developed that are less susceptible to Fusarium and Verticillium wilts.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLANTING SITE

Many plant problems are caused by growing plants in the wrong location. Sun-loving plants will be more prone to diseases if planted in the shade. Plants that need good drainage may suffer from root rot if planted in wet areas. Acid-loving plants will lack vigor and be more susceptible to insects and diseases if not planted in acid soil. Sunlight, soil type, drainage and temperature interact to create a variety of microclimates in your yard. It is important to choose plants that are well suited to these microclimates.

PROVIDE GOOD GROWING CONDITIONS

Healthy plants are more resistant to insect and disease problems than are stressed plants. Follow these important cultural practices:

- Transplant in the spring or fall.
- Do not overcrowd plants. Good air circulation reduces disease problems.
- Water deeply and regularly. Learn the specific water requirements of individual plants. Try drip irrigation instead of overhead watering. Wet foliage encourages disease development.
- Fertilize properly.

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ROTATE PLANTING LOCATIONS

Many insect and disease problems can be controlled in the vegetable garden by rotating crops. Crop rotation prevents build-up of soil-inhabiting insects and disease organisms. Interplanting crops can also help slow the spread of pests.

KEEP THE GARDEN CLEAN

Remove disease-infected leaves as soon as you notice them. Clean up crop refuse after harvesting. Decaying plants and fruits can harbor insects and diseases. Keep garden free from weeds. They compete for nutrients and can also harbor pests.

A thorough clean up in the fall is one of the most important things you can do to insure a healthier garden. Fallen leaves and other debris provide an ideal place for disease spores and insects to overwinter. Remove all fallen leaves, fruits, weeds and dead annuals from your yard. Diseased plant material should not be added to the compost pile, as composting will not kill most disease organisms.

EXAMPLES

1. All birches are susceptible to an insect called the bronze birch borer. Monarch birch, Whitespire birch and heritage birch are varieties that show some resistance to this insect pest.
2. Birches are most insect-resistant if grown in moist, well-fertilized soil.
3. Plant potato varieties that are resistant to potato scab, such as Nooksack, Russet Burbank, and Red Norland. Buy certified disease-free seed potatoes.
4. Roses are susceptible to black spot and powdery mildew fungus diseases. Resistant varieties include Pascali, Allgold, Charisma, and Double Delight.
5. Blueberries and rhododendrons need to grow in acid soils. Otherwise, they are stunted and their leaves become discolored. Acidify soil with sulfur or fertilizers for acid-loving plants.
6. Raspberries and strawberries grown where soil drainage is poor will be susceptible to root rot. Don't overwater.
7. Pine trees suffering from drought are more susceptible to pine beetles. Keep pines thinned properly and occasionally water trees deeply.
8. Plants in the same family, such as strawberries and raspberries, are subject to the same viruses and shouldn't be planted next to each other or where either has been planted for the previous 3-5 years.