

Squash Bug (*Anasa tristis*) Management



Adult squash bugs are dark gray or dark brown with an elongated shield shape.
Image from umn.edu

These insects feed on plants in the squash family. This includes zucchini and other summer squashes, winter squash and pumpkins. Melons and cucumbers are in the same family but are less likely to be affected. These pests multiply quickly and can cause the plants to turn yellow, wilt and die off.

What can I do about Squash Bugs?

If you are growing any of these plants (summer and winter squash, pumpkins and melons and cucumbers) in your plot, check your plants frequently for bugs and eggs. If you have many bugs on your plant, please remove the entire plant. You should dispose in the garbage, not a compost pile or trench.



Image of a zucchini plant infested with Squash bugs. This is an example of a plant that should be removed.



Image of egg cluster on underside of leaf. Image from Savvygardening.com

If you see hatched bugs or adults, remove them from the plant. You can crush them or throw them in a container with soapy water, which will kill them. It does take time to remove the bugs by hand but this is needed to prevent spreading to other plants. Organic insecticidal soaps can be used but keep in mind, this can harm other beneficial insects.



Tips for Prevention for next Season



Image showing use of duct tape to remove eggs. Image from savvygardening.com

It is very likely that these bugs will come back every year in a shared setting like a community garden. **If you grow squash family plants, start checking them for these bugs and eggs early in the spring.**

Eggs hatch about every 10 days. Check plants at least once a week for these insects in all stages of life. The eggs are found on the underside of the leaves. Eggs can be removed by using duct tape or you can remove the entire leaf.

See the articles below for information on using floating row cover early in the season to prevent them from laying eggs. There is also advice on planting aromatic companion plants that may help to repel them.

Resources and More Information

See the articles below for additional tips for managing Squash Bugs using organic methods.

General overview of Squash Bug management without pesticides: https://www.pesticide.org/squash_bugs

How do get rid of Squash Bugs, including a description of how to use duct tape to remove the eggs: <https://savvygardening.com/how-to-get-rid-of-squash-bugs/>