

# Growing Summer Squash in Georgia: Pest and Disease Management



## Tip #1 Submit Your Soil for a Routine Soil Test.

Soil test results can guide you in creating healthy soil. Healthy soil means healthy plants! Knowing your **soil nutritional profile** can also help **control blossom end rot**, a condition related to soil calcium levels.

## Tip #2 Plant Flowers Around Squash Plants.

Squash have separate **male and female flowers**. A **pollinator is needed** to produce fruit, and flowers attract those needed insects. Also, flowers like black-eyed Susan, celosia, and yarrow attract parasitic insects like Scelionid wasps and Trichogrammatiade which **provide biological control** for squash pests.

## Tip #3 Add Natural Mulch Around Your Plants.

**Mulch evens out soil temperature and moisture.** It can also aid insect predators like spiders, ground beetles, rove beetles and big-eyed bugs in getting to the squash bug pests.



Squash Vine Borer—Adult



Squash Vine Borer—Larva

Jim Jasinski, Ohio State University Extension, Bugwood.org

## Tip #4 Leave Space Between Squash Plants.

**Air flow** assists in keeping plant **leaves dry**. This can **lower disease-causing conditions**.

## Tip #5 Scout for Insects Frequently.

**Squash bugs** often lay their eggs underneath plant leaves and nymphs like to hide in shaded parts of the plant. These insects can be easily **removed by hand** when spotted.



Squash Bug and Eggs

Gerald Holmes, California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, Bugwood.org

## Tip #6 Water the Plant at the Soil Line to Keep the Leaves Dry.

This helps **control** the disease **powdery mildew**.



Powdery Mildew

Gerald Holmes, California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, Bugwood.org

## Tip #7 Practice Crop Rotation.

Squash bug adults overwinter in protected areas around infested plants. **Planting in a new location the next year may reduce squash bug numbers.**

### How to Manage Common Problems:

Common Problem	Proactions/Reactions
Squash vine borers	Crop rotation*
Squash bugs	Trap crops**
Powdery Mildew	Plant early and give space for plenty of air flow

\***Crop rotation:** the practice of rotating families of different crops throughout the growing area, so that the same family doesn't grow in the same location in consecutive seasons. This helps prevent the spread of disease, pests, and is good for soil fertility.

\*\***Trap crops:** Plants that are planted nearby the main, desired crops to attract pests away from those crops.