



## **SQUASH BUGS - *Anasa tristis***

### **QUICK FACTS**

- The squash bug attacks squash and pumpkins but can also attack other plants in the cucurbit family, such as cucumbers.
- Squash bugs suck the sap out of leaves and cause yellow spots that later turn brown.
- It is most important to control squash bugs when the plants are young seedlings and when they are flowering.
- They can cause young plants to wilt and die.
- Squash bugs are not a problem if you see them feeding on plants in the fall.

### **CONTROL - HOW TO GET RID OF SQUASH BUGS ONCE YOU HAVE THEM**

- Early detection is critical! You want to catch squash bugs before they grow into adults or they are very difficult to get rid of completely.
- Pick egg masses, nymphs and adults and kill them by dropping them into a pail of soapy water. Once the bugs are dead, it's fine to dump the water anywhere. You can also simply scrape the eggs off the leaves with a butter knife and let them fall onto the ground, where beetles will eat them. Eggs hatch in about ten days, so be sure to check for them on at least a weekly basis.
- Place a board, or newspapers, in the garden at night. During the night, both adults and nymphs will congregate underneath the board. Squash between two hard surfaces in the morning and dispose.
- Keep checking your plants, at least daily. If there are no more than a few vines infected, keep collecting and destroying the bugs and crushing the egg clusters that you find on the undersides of leaves.
- If you have a plant that is covered with squash bugs, treat that plant as a 'trap plant' – remove the entire plant, with as many bugs as possible, and then drown 'em!
- Diatomaceous earth contains no toxic poisons and works quickly on contact. Dust lightly and evenly over crops wherever pests are found.

### **PREVENTION – GOOD PRACTICES TO KEEP POPULATION DOWN**

- Practice crop rotation.
- Keep vines covered until blossoming begins. Remove the cover for pollination needs. There is only one generation of squash bugs per year, and you can avoid them by covering your plants for the first month of spring. You can also delay planting your squash until the early months of summer.
- Companion planting can be useful in repelling squash bugs. Try planting nasturtium and tansy around your plants that are commonly affected by squash bugs.
- Select varieties of squash that are resistant to the squash bug if you have a big problem. 'Butternut', 'Royal Acorn', and 'Sweet Cheese' varieties are all more resistant to squash bugs.

**SOURCES:**

<https://www.planetnatural.com/pest-problem-solver/garden-pests/squash-bug-control/>

<https://www.almanac.com/pest/squash-bugs>

<https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-insects/squash-bugs>

**PHOTOS:**



