



The main responsibility is monitoring the garden for pests and diseases. This includes twice-per-month checks of garden plots for signs of pest outbreaks; seeking diagnosis and recommendations from available resources, such as the Utah State Extension Office; and promptly passing on information to gardeners for action. If you are unable to complete your responsibilities, please contact the WCG Garden Manager.

## Twice-Per-Month Pest/Disease Checks

Community gardeners have a various levels of gardening expertise, and may not recognize pest and disease issues when they occur. When unaddressed, one gardener's problem can quickly become an outbreak that affects everyone. Your role is to help prevent this by regularly visiting the garden and looking for the early signs of pest and disease infestations. You will need to familiarize yourself with some of the basic garden pests and diseases, such as aphids, earwigs, squash bugs, spider mites, powdery mildew, curly top virus, etc. An excellent resource is Utah State University (USU) Extension's handbook, "Vegetable Pests of Utah", which is available in the garden shed. USU Extension also provides excellent email newsletters that you can subscribe to here:

<https://utahpests.usu.edu/ipm/subscriptions>

From June to October, please check all plots for signs of pests and diseases. Carry the plot map and record the plot number and description of any pests or diseases you observe. In the early stages of an infestation, signs may be inconspicuous, such as squash bug eggs on the underside of leaves. As the infestation progresses, many pest and disease symptoms can mimic signs of water deficiency, ie wilting, parched, or dead leaves. To rule this out, you can check a plot's subsurface moisture level by sticking your finger a few inches down near the drip lines. If it is dry, it may be an irrigation related issue and you can follow up with the Irrigation Steward. If the area is moist check for pest and disease issues, but keep in mind that the cause of plant distress may be related to other issues, such as transplant shock, heat stress, root competition from nearby trees, poor soil conditions, inappropriate use of organic fertilizers or pesticides, etc.

## Seeking Diagnosis and Treatment Recommendations

If you are able to positively identify pest or disease issues, please notify the gardener of the issue and provide some organic recommendations for treatment (please cc the WCG Garden Manager and other Pest Monitors so that they can coordinate further). If you are unable to positively identify the pest or disease, check with the WCG Garden Manager and other Pest Monitors in your garden to see if they recognize the issue.

If unresolved, the USU Extension Help Desk is your best bet for reliable diagnostics, and can be reached at [mastergardener@usu.edu](mailto:mastergardener@usu.edu), Include your contact information (including a phone number), as much detail as possible about your issue, and photographs. Please forward any information they provide to the gardener concerned, and cc the WCG Garden Manager and other Pest Monitors to keep them in the loop.

Optionally, you may take samples from infected plots to the **USU Extension Help Desk located in room S1-300 in the South County building at 2001 S State Street in Salt Lake City (385-468-4828)**. The Help Desk is open Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays from 9am to noon during the growing season and is staffed by Master Gardeners and horticulturalists. Before taking any samples from a gardener's plot, you must first receive their permission. Keep in mind that the Help Desk diagnostic abilities are limited in many instances, and for a definitive diagnosis, USU offers various levels of lab tests for a small fee, which you can suggest to the gardener in question. Remember, it is only your responsibility to help diagnose pest and disease issues in other people's plots, not treat them. That is their responsibility. Please do not do any work in another gardener's plot.

