



Name _____

Garden Pests and Problems: Plant Diseases

Plants can come down with diseases just like humans. A plant disease causes the normal growth of a plant to change or stop. It changes how the plant looks or the way it grows. Plant diseases are caused by:

Fungi – organisms that cannot make their own food. Fungi are the most common causes of plant diseases, and they are the easiest to see because there are often signs of the fungi growing on the plant.

Bacteria – tiny, one-celled creatures that can only be seen under a microscope.

Nematodes – tiny worms that can only be seen under a microscope.

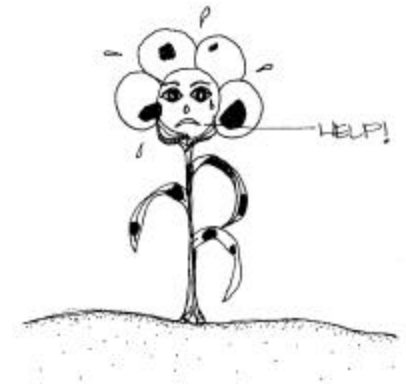
Viruses – a living creature so small that instead of trying to see it, gardeners identify a virus by the changes it causes in the plant.

What Do Plant Diseases Look Like?

A gardener knows that a plant has a disease when the plant shows “symptoms” of the disease, just as you have a fever or sneeze when you have a cold. Some of the most common symptoms of plant diseases are:

1. Leaf spots

Small, round brown or yellow spots on leaves. Fungi, bacteria, viruses, and leaf nematodes can all cause leaf spots.



2. Yellowing of leaves

Leaves turn yellow. Viruses, bacteria, and nutrient problems can all cause leaf yellowing.

3. Wilt

Plants look like they need water (but they really don't). Wilt is caused by a root rot fungus or soil nematodes that eat plant roots.

4. Mildew

A white or grayish mold on the leaves or stems caused by a fungus.

5. Leaf mottling or mosaic

A pattern of twisted yellow lines in the leaf. A virus causes leaf mottling.

Find a book in the library with pictures of plant diseases or find pictures on the Internet. Find a picture of each of the different symptoms listed above.