

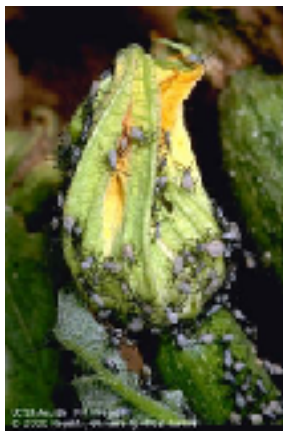
Squash Bug

The Problem

Squash bug adults and nymphs feed primarily on squash and pumpkins, sucking plant juices and leaving the plants unhealthy and often infected with diseases.

Identification

- Appearance: Squash bugs are $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch long and $\frac{1}{3}$ as wide. Adults are winged and grayish brown with a flat back.
- The nymphs, shown in the middle photo, are wingless, spider like and often covered with a whitish powder.
- Eggs are found either on stems or the underside of leaves.



- Signs of damage: Infested leaves lose nutrients and water and become speckled, later turning yellow to brown. With a heavy infestation plants begin to wilt and the points of attack become black and brittle. (It's not always easy to tell the difference between wilt caused by a bug infestation and one caused by a bacteria or fungus. You'll just have to look for the bugs.)

Controls

- The best method for controlling squash bugs is **sanitation**. Remove old cucurbit plants (squash, zucchini, pumpkins, melons, and cucumbers) immediately after harvest.
- Squash bugs overwinter under dead leaves, rocks, wood, and other garden debris. Therefore, controlling them begins with practicing good sanitation; removing their shelters before winter sets in.
- Using a trellis for vining types of squash and melons can make them less vulnerable to squash bug infestation.

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- [Neem oil](#), organic insecticides and [insecticidal soaps](#) can be used to control adults and nymphs, but these are wide-spectrum sprays and eliminate beneficial insects as well as harmful ones.

Important note: since squash bugs can fly — and don't mind traveling some distance to find your plants — it's impossible to avoid getting squash bugs in your cucurbits without the cooperation and active involvement of your neighbors in the garden.