

# URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

## Common pests and diseases: Cauliflower

When growing vegetables, it is always exciting to care for the plant throughout its growing phase and then harvest it for delicious recipes later on, but one thing to watch out for is pests and diseases. Different plants are susceptible to different types of pests and diseases, and it is important to make yourself aware so you can keep a watchful eye and also take any preventative methods to keep your plants safe throughout their lifespan.

Cauliflower can fall victim to several different pests and diseases.



[Cauliflower seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

### Pests:

There are several signs and symptoms a cauliflower plant will display if it is being affected by insects. The most common signs are holes in the leaves, missing foliage or poor vigor and missing vegetation. Several common pests affecting cauliflower plants are aphids, cabbage loopers, cabbage worms, slugs, snails and flea beetles.

Aphids are small insects with soft bodies. They can hurt cauliflower plants by sucking on its leaves or stems, or it can also produce a secretion that covers the plant's flowers and stunts growth. A clue that you may have aphids is if you notice ants, because ants will farm the aphids for their secretion.

Cabbage loopers are light green with yellow stripes. This pest's larva will create tunnels in the cauliflower's white head.

There are several different kinds of cabbage worms, such as cabbage webworms and the imported cabbage worm. Cabbage

webworms are small and green-striped. Imported cabbage worms are green with an orange stripe. The larva of insects, which typically are cabbage worms, are some of the most destructive pests to cauliflower.

Slugs and snails eat holes in the foliage and leave a slimy trail along the plant. You can pick them off at night, when they're out and about, or use a diatomaceous earth treatment to control them.

Also use diatomaceous earth to control flea beetles, which will eat holes in the leaves and feed on the cauliflower's young roots.

To treat other pests naturally, use horticultural soaps or pick the bugs off with your hands.

### Diseases:

Diseases affecting cauliflower plants also can affect other cruciferous plants as well, so it's good to know what they appear as so you



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can prevent them across your garden. The most common diseases for cauliflower are black spot, which is a fungal disease that turns the leaves yellow and causes them to drop from the plant; downy mildew, which is a fungus that attacks young and old plants, creates yellow spots and a white mold; bacterial soft rot, which can cause the plant's roots to become soft and mushy and more. To help prevent cauliflower diseases, it's important to practice crop rotation, add lime to the soil to prevent fungal infections and make sure there is plenty of space between plants for good air circulation.



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