

A Note on Cucumber Beetles

Hello gardeners,

As you are aware, the striped cucumber beetle has been a significant pest in the Coverdale Community Garden in recent years, in some cases destroying entire crops of cucumbers, squash, zucchini, and melons.

As such, it is the decision of the Garden staff not to plant any plants in the cucurbit family in any communal beds for the 2022 and 2023 growing seasons. Please note, that it is not only the defoliation damage that the cucumber beetles cause to cucurbits, but also the bacterial wilt disease that they spread which causes plants to succumb to the damage.

While we suggest that the community gardeners do the same, and avoid planting cucurbits for the next two seasons, we understand that outright banning an entire family of vegetables may be to an extreme for a community garden.

As such, we ask that if you simply *must* plant cucumbers, squash, melons, and zucchini, please follow the following guidelines:

- Plant cucurbits from transplants and wait until later in the season (Mid July) to plant.
- Choose varieties that have been bred to be more resistant of cucumber beetles.

Buttercup Squash	Ambercup
Cucumber	Beit Alpha, Big Burpless, Burpless Beauty, Burpless Bush, Burpless Tasty Green, English Telegraph, Garden Sweet Burpless Hybrid, Green Knight, Marketmore 80, Muncher, Orient Express, Palace King, Perseus, Suyo
Melon	Classic, Gallia, Passport, Pulsar, Rising Star, Super Star
Pumpkin	Big Max, Baby Boo
Summer Squash	Cacozelia, Caserta
Zucchini	President, Black Jack, Green Eclipse, Seneca Zucchini, Senator, Super Select, Dark Green Zucchini, Embassy Dark Green Zucchini'

- Till your plot well before planting. This should help to kill any beetles lurking in the soil.
- Cover your cucurbit plants with fine mesh netting until the plants are large enough to withstand attack from the beetles, this is usually when the second or third round of flowers begin to develop.
- Squish any cucumber beetles on site. Beetles are slowest and easier to catch in the early morning. Pick them off plants by hand and squish them. (a dust buster works for this as well!)
- Use cucumber beetle sticky traps in your garden around your plants.
- Try solarizing your soil: cover your bed in clear plastic in the weeks before planting. The greenhouse effect will heat up the soil, killing any beetles or larvae.
- Encourage beneficial Insects: Planting companion plants such as marigolds, nasturtiums, dill, chamomile, and sweet alyssum can help to attract predatory wasps and ladybugs, which feed on cucumber beetle larvae
- Plant hardy perennials which encourage soldier beetles to nest. These insects also eat cucumber beetles

If we all follow these guidelines and work together to eradicate these pests, we can all look forward to a good harvest of pumpkins, squash, cucumbers, and melons in the coming years!