

Problem Diagnosis for Cauliflower

UC Davis, Vegetable Research and Information Center

<http://vric.ucdavis.edu/pdf/cauliflower.pdf>

What the Problem Looks Like	Probable Cause	Comments
Head cracking. Leaves may grow through head	Excess nitrogen fertilizer Hot, dry weather	Fertilize properly. Plant so crop develops in mild of cool weather. Do not let soil dry out.
Heads yellow or brown instead of white.	Sunburn	When head is 3 inches in diameter, tie outer leaves around head with twine. Harvest in 4 to 7 days.
Poor heading	Overcrowding	Thin plants early.
	Dry soil	Irrigate properly.
	Root rot	Rotate; remove old plant debris.
Irregular holes in leaves. Chewed leaves. Small seedling plants destroyed.	Caterpillars (cabbage loopers, armyworms) Snails, slugs	<i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> is very effective.
Small holes in leaves growing points in young plants. Loose cocoons about 1/3 inch long on leaves.	Diamond back moth caterpillar	<i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> is very effective Older plants damaged. Destroy weeds (mustard type) before planting.
Deformed, curled leaves. Colonies of gray-green insects on leaves. Sticky honeydew.	Aphids	Use insecticidal soap spray. Control ants with sticky barrier or insecticide
Distorted leaves turning brown. Witted plants.	Harlequin bug	Insects suck fluids from plant tissue. Handpick bugs and egg masses. Remove old, nonproductive cole crops --wild radish, mustard -since they're alternate hosts.
Tunnels through roots. Plants fall to grow, may wilt, die. Feeding tunnels in germinating seedlings, which fail to produce plants.	Cabbage maggot	Prevent infestation. No practical control when maggots occur on growing crop.
Stunted, wilted plants. Leaves yellowish-colored. Small, glistening white specks on mots.	Cyst nematode	Rotate. Do not plant cole crops on same site year after year.
Wilted plants. Swollen, misshapen roots. Roots rot; plant dies in later stages.	Clubroot Caused by the fungus <i>Plasmodiophora brassicae</i>	Common in acid soils. Add lime if pH below 7.2. Rotate for at least two years.
Irregular, yellowish areas on upper leaf surface; grayish powder on undersides.	Downy mildew	Improve air circulation. Tolerate ft. Plant resistant varieties.
Heads suddenly split	Improper watering. Sudden, heavy watering after prolonged dry period results in too rapid growth and heads crack.	Do not allow soil to get too dry. If it does get too dry, apply water slowly at first. Prune roots to reduce water uptake and slow growth.
Bolting	Physiological disorder	Plant at right time.
Heads soft and rotted	Bacterial soft rot	Rotate; plant in well-drained soil.
Leaves riddled with shotholes	Flea beetles	Control weeds. Use rotenone with insecticidal soap.

