THE 5 FOOT FARM

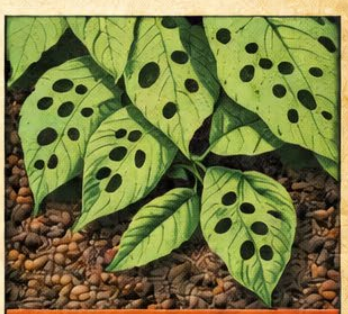
Troubleshooting Guide



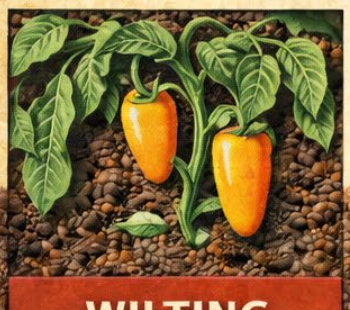
YELLOWING



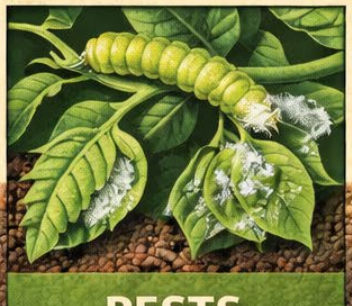
MOLD



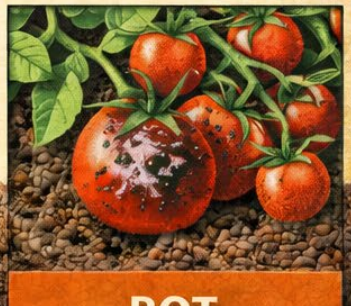
HOLES



WILTING



PESTS



ROT



BEGINNER FRIENDLY

🌱 THE 5 FOOT FARM TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

Fix the Most Common Problems in Minutes

How to Use

1. Find the symptom you see
2. Read the likely cause
3. Apply the simple fix
4. Save the harvest

This guide covers **90% of all small-garden problems.**

🟩 SECTION 1 — SEEDS & GERMINATION PROBLEMS

❌ Problem: Seeds Not Sprouting

Likely Causes

- Soil too cold
- Seeds planted too deep
- Old or poor-quality seeds
- Soil too dry

Quick Fix

- Check seed packet temperature range
- Plant shallow (most seeds ¼–½ inch)
- Keep soil evenly moist (not soaked)
- Replant after 10–14 days if nothing emerges

Pro Tip:
Warm-season crops (beans, cucumbers, squash) will NOT sprout in cold soil.

❌ Problem: Seedlings Sprout Then Die (“Damping Off”)

Likely Causes

- Overwatering
- Poor air circulation

- Fungus in soil

Quick Fix

- Let soil dry slightly between watering
- Increase airflow
- Use clean containers & fresh soil

🟩 SECTION 2 — GROWTH & HEALTH PROBLEMS

❌ Problem: Plants Growing Slowly or Stunted

Likely Causes

- Poor soil nutrients
- Cold soil
- Roots crowded

Quick Fix

- Add compost or organic fertilizer
- Wait for warmer temperatures
- Thin plants to proper spacing

Rule:
Crowded plants = small harvest.

❌ Problem: Yellow Leaves

Likely Causes

- Overwatering
- Nitrogen deficiency
- Poor drainage

Quick Fix

- Let soil dry before watering again
- Add compost or fish emulsion
- Improve drainage

Special Note:
Bottom leaves yellowing = normal aging
Top leaves yellowing = nutrient problem

❌ Problem: Wilting Even Though Soil Is Wet

Likely Causes

- Root rot
- Poor drainage
- Heat stress

Quick Fix

- Improve drainage immediately
- Water early morning only
- Add mulch to cool soil

🟩 SECTION 3 — PEST PROBLEMS

🐛 Problem: Holes in Leaves

Likely Pests

- Flea beetles
- Caterpillars
- Slugs

Quick Fix

- Hand-pick visible pests
- Spray with neem oil or insecticidal soap
- Use row cover early season

Fast Defense Plants:

- Radishes (trap crop)
- Basil
- Onions

🐜 Problem: Aphids (Sticky Leaves, Clusters of Bugs)

Likely Causes

- Warm weather
- Soft new growth

Quick Fix

- Spray off with strong water stream
- Apply neem oil
- Introduce ladybugs (optional)

Companion Fix:
Plant basil, garlic, onions nearby.

🐌 Problem: Slugs & Snails

Signs

- Ragged holes
- Shiny slime trails

Quick Fix

- Hand-pick at night
- Use beer traps
- Sprinkle crushed eggshells around plants

🟩 SECTION 4 — FLOWERS & FRUIT PROBLEMS

❌ Problem: Plants Flower But No Fruit

Likely Causes

- Too much nitrogen
- Poor pollination
- Heat stress

Quick Fix

- Stop high-nitrogen fertilizer
- Hand-pollinate (shake plants or use small brush)
- Water consistently

Common Crops Affected:
Tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash

❌ Problem: Flowers Falling Off

Likely Causes

- Temperature extremes
- Drought stress
- Nutrient imbalance

Quick Fix

- Water deeply and regularly
- Shade plants during extreme heat
- Use balanced fertilizer

❌ Problem: Small or Misshapen Fruit

Likely Causes

- Poor pollination
- Inconsistent watering
- Crowded plants

Quick Fix

- Encourage pollinators (flowers nearby)
- Water evenly
- Thin crowded vines

🟩 SECTION 5 — DISEASE PROBLEMS

🍂 Problem: Brown Spots on Leaves

Likely Causes

- Fungal disease
- Wet leaves
- Poor airflow

Quick Fix

- Remove affected leaves
- Water soil, not leaves
- Space plants properly

❌ Problem: White Powder on Leaves (Powdery Mildew)

Likely Causes

- Humid weather
- Poor air circulation

Quick Fix

- Remove infected leaves
- Spray baking soda solution (1 tsp baking soda + 1 quart water)
- Increase spacing and airflow

❌ Problem: Plants Suddenly Collapse

Likely Causes

- Root rot
- Borer insects
- Severe disease

Quick Fix

- Remove plant immediately
- Improve drainage
- Rotate crops next season

🟩 SECTION 6 — HARVEST PROBLEMS

❌ Problem: Vegetables Taste Bitter

Likely Causes

- Heat stress
- Underwatering
- Over-mature harvest

Quick Fix

- Harvest earlier
- Water consistently
- Shade greens in hot weather

Common Crops:
Lettuce, spinach, cucumbers

❌ Problem: Tough or Woody Vegetables

Likely Causes

- Left too long before harvest
- Drought stress

Quick Fix

- Harvest earlier
- Water deeply
- Replant fast crops often

🟩 SECTION 7 — MOST COMMON BEGINNER MISTAKES

🚨 THE BIG 7 SMALL-GARDEN MISTAKES

1. Overwatering
2. Crowding plants
3. Planting too early in cold soil

4. Ignoring spacing
5. Forgetting succession planting
6. Not harvesting often
7. Using too much fertilizer

🧭 QUICK DIAGNOSIS CHART

Symptom	Likely Cause	Fix
Yellow leaves	Overwater / low nitrogen	Dry soil + compost
Holes in leaves	Insects	Neem + hand pick
Wilting	Heat / root issue	Water early + mulch
No fruit	No pollination	Hand pollinate
Bitter greens	Heat stress	Shade + water
Mold spots	Fungus	Remove leaves + airflow
