

RUTGERS MASTER GARDENERS OF MORRIS COUNTY
COMMUNITY GARDEN IPM TEAM REPORT #9
August 21, 2026



WHAT'S IN THIS REPORT?

Tips

- End of season, but garden lifelong learning continues

New Problems

- Basil Downy Mildew
- Zucchini mold
- Leaf-footed bug eggs
- Fusarium Wilt on basil

Spotlight

- Dragonfly

IPM TEAM REPORTS

The Morris County Rutgers Master Gardener Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Team scouts one or more community gardens each week. Every other week the team provides IPM Team reports on problems first observed during the two-week period. These reports contain summary descriptions, management methods and research-based references for more information. Refer to Rutgers Fact Sheet 1123 and 1124 for all recommended controls for insect and disease pests. They are valuable resources throughout the growing season:

[Rutgers Fact Sheet FS1123 Vegetable Insect Control](#)

[Rutgers Fact Sheet FS1124 Vegetable Disease Control](#)

The gardens scouted by the IPM Team include the Morris County Park Commission Community Garden, the Morris Township Ted Largman Community Garden, the Madison Community Garden, the Wick Garden in Jockey Hollow National Park, the Randolph Community Garden and the Washington Township Community Garden. The team also reports on sightings in the Pequannock Community Garden and their own vegetable gardens.

IPM Team Reports are available on the Rutgers Morris County Master Gardener website: [Morris County Master Gardener website](#). Scroll to the bottom of the page to view the reports. On the website, you can also subscribe to the IPM Team Reports. When you subscribe, you will be sent a confirmation email that you need to respond to. If you don't see the confirmation email, check your spam.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS and TIPS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Our garden scouting is winding down for the season. Overall, we observed a good year that endured many challenges from drought, heatwaves, severe storms and poor air quality from wildfires. Many would say it was a bit of a rollercoaster, an unsettled firecracker, or a sizzler of a summer. All are spot-on. As we move into September, the good news is, it isn't over yet! Please continue to preserve, dry or freeze your harvest and transplant any seedlings you've started for your fall crop.

We also hope you will continue to visit and support your local farmer and farm markets. Spring freezes brought many farmers severe hardship with the loss of apple and other fruit crops. They work so hard, please remember them!

Don't forget autumn is a perfect time to test your soil, plant spring bulbs and complete a garden cleanup of all the old debris. Begin to review your garden successes and disappointments. Note what worked, what didn't and make changes for next year. Always remember to take good care outside, as mosquitos are still active until a hard frost, but ticks, in their various life stages, remain active all year when temps are above 32°F.

Thank you for reading our reports and we look forward to seeing you all again in 2027!

SNYDER RESEARCH & EXTENSION FARM'S

OPEN HOUSE & TOMATO TASTING



TAKE A WAGON TOUR OF THE FARM TO LEARN ABOUT THE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PROGRAMS BEING CONDUCTED. TASTE OVER 50 TOMATO VARIETIES!

RAIN/SHINE
AUGUST 26, 2026
1:00 PM - 7:00 PM
 Rutgers Snyder Research and Extension Farm
 140 Locust Grove Road
 Pittstown, NJ 08867

Rutgers faculty, staff, and Master Gardener volunteers will be available to answer your gardening and research questions.

Scan for details or visit
<https://snyderfarm.rutgers.edu/open-house>






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New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
 SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

TIP: Garden Lifelong Learning

Just because we're shifting gears with the season, doesn't mean it all ends. As gardeners, we're always learning, reading and wanting to keep our horticultural wits cultivated.

Below, please find some Rutgers programs that may be of interest.

[SNYDER RESEARCH & EXTENSION FARM'S OPEN HOUSE & TOMATO TASTING](#) August 26th

[Lunch and Learn Program Understanding Food Labels](#)
 September 1

[The Sleeping Beauties: Waking Up Your Garden with Spring Bulbs](#)
 September 15th

[Dreaming Your Garden for Next Year - An EARTH Center Children's Garden Activity](#) September 19th

[Vermicomposting, Composting with Worms, Workshop](#) September 22nd

[Bee-ginner's Beekeeping: The Basics of Apiculture](#) October 1st

[Pollinator Gardens Workshop](#)
 October 14th

[Lunch and Learn October: Filling Your Day with More Fall Fruits and Vegetables](#) October 6th

[Introduction to Plant Identification](#) October 8th

[Eat What You Grow: Fall](#) October 8th

[Managing Diseases of Ornamental Landscape Plants](#) December 4th

[Soil and Plant Relationships](#) December 10th

[Caring for Ornamental Plants](#) December 14th

[Rutgers Morris County Master Gardeners Speakers Bureau Events Both In-Person and Virtual](#)

Please check these events out!

Rutgers Morris County Master Gardeners are full knowledge and happy to share it!

REPORTS ON NEW PROBLEMS

Problem: Basil Downy Mildew Disease (*Peronospora belbahrii*)

Where: Madison Community Garden August 10

Description: Basil Downy Mildew is neither a true fungus nor a mold, but a specialized pathogen called "oomycetes." It is wind-borne and can spread quickly, especially during wet, humid conditions. Infected plants develop yellow leaves that can be misdiagnosed as a nutrient deficiency or waterlogged soil. However, check the underside of the leaf and there you'll find a fuzzy mass of purplish-brown spores. Commonly grown sweet basils, such as Genovese, are the most susceptible to downy mildew, but new resistant cultivars are available. Spice types such as Thai, Cinnamon, Lemon, Lime, or Red Rosie are also less susceptible.



Figure: Basil plant with downy mildew disease.
Photo: M. Albright, NJAES



Figure: Underside of a basil leaf showing purplish-brown spores of downy mildew.
Photo: M. Albright, NJAES



Figure: Rutgers variety, Devotion, showing no signs of disease.
Photo: M. Sample, NJAES



Figure: Rutgers variety, Obsession, growing without any disease.
Photo: M. Sample, NJAES

Management:

- Plant resistant varieties. Try Rutgers DMR varieties Devotion, Obsession, Passion, or Thunderstruck.
- If you buy basil plants from a nursery, check them carefully for disease symptoms before buying them. Do not purchase plants that show any signs of disease.
- Cultural practices include proper plant spacing for optimum air flow, plant in full sun and avoid overhead watering.
- Pathogen is transmitted by wind, rain splash, contaminated seeds and plants.

- The disease moves from the bottom of plant to the top of plant, so harvest any unaffected leaves from top of plant and use promptly.
- Remove and throw out infected plants to reduce the spread of disease.
- Grow some plants in containers indoors.

References:

- Rutgers University [Ultra-Niche Crops Series- Fresh Market Basil](#)
- Rutgers University [Plant & Pest Advisory](#)
- University of Maryland [Downy Mildew on Basil in the Home Garden](#)

Problem: Zucchini Mold (*Choanephora cucubitarum*)

Where: Madison Community Garden August 10

Description: Zucchini fruits were found covered in a dark fuzzy mold that caused them to be soft, watery and difficult to handle. *Choanephora* rot appears following hot weather. It develops on the blossom end of the fruit and gradually covers the fruit with spores. Cucumbers and melons can also be affected. This disease can be short lived and subsequent fruit sets are usually unaffected until favorable conditions reoccur.



Figure: Characteristic fuzzy mold completely covered this zucchini from blossom end to the stem.

Photo: N. Gardner, NJAES

Management:

- Cucurbits require generous space to allow for their leaves to ramble. Provide good growing conditions that favor healthy plant growth, such as planting in full sun with proper spacing for air circulation.
- Avoid overhead watering. Fungus thrives in wet, humid conditions.
- This fungus can be spread by splashing water, so mulch your plot with grass clippings, salt hay, straw, shredded leaves or use landscape fabric.
- Promptly remove these infected fruits. They will never recover and will become difficult to pick up.
- Practice good garden hygiene and remove old plant debris at end of the season.

References:

- University of Maryland [Choanephora rot of Vegetables](#)
- Cornell University [Choanephora fruit rot of squash and pumpkin](#)

Problem: Leaffooted bug eggs (*Leptoglossus* sp.)

Where: Madison Community Garden August 10

Description: This is a new find for the team. These brown, barrel shaped eggs were found on the underside of a squash leaf. No adult was found for classification. Although there are different species, they all share a hind leg that has a leaflike appearance. They undergo incomplete metamorphosis with egg, nymph and adult. Adults are about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch and brown, but could have various markings. Adults will overwinter in plant debris and emerge in spring to mate. Leaffooted bugs are not typically a major pest, but crops of tomatoes, peppers, corn, almonds and pistachio can be blemished by adults piercing and feeding in search of seeds. Nymphs feed on plant juices. Most adult damage can be found on maturing fruits. There may be 1-2 generations per year.



Figure: A row of Leaffooted eggs on a squash leaf.

Photo: L. Terraneo, NJAES

Management:

- Handpick and destroy. Wear gloves, as they emit an odor when crushed.
- Practice good garden hygiene. Remove old plant debris to prevent spaces for adults to overwinter.
- Natural enemies include assassin bugs, spiders and tachinid flies.
- Row cover may help to prevent damage on maturing fruits.
- Insecticidal soap or neem oil will only help control nymphs. Read label and use accordingly.

References:

- University of California [Leaffooted bugs](#)
- University of Georgia [Leaffooted Bugs](#)
- Texas A&M [Protect Your Garden from Leaffooted Bugs](#)

Problem: Fusarium Wilt of basil (*Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *Basilicum*)

Where: Morris County Community Garden August 8

Description: Basil plants affected show signs of sudden wilting, discolored stems, yellowed leaves and leaf drop due to their vascular system being disrupted. If you slice open the stem, you'll find discolored vascular tissue. Throw the plant out and do not place in your compost pile. Fusarium is a host-specific soil-borne fungus that survives on soil, seed and tools and its spores can also spread via wind. Sweet basils are usually affected, but there are fast growing types that one can grow to harvest before any potential disease strikes. Mint can also be a carrier of the disease, but may not exhibit symptoms. Unfortunately, this fungus can remain active in a plot or field for up to twelve years.



Figure: Discolored stem on a wilted basil plant with yellowed leaves.

Photo: University of Maryland Extension

Management:

- Maintain healthy plants with plenty of full sun.
- Plant varieties that show some resistance to diseases such as Aroma-2, Prospera, Obsession, Nia Prospera DMR and Noga Prospera DMR. Lemon and Purple basil also show signs of resistance.
- Purchase certified seed.
- Practice good garden hygiene. Remove and throw out diseased plant debris to help prevent spread. Do not compost.
- Use crop rotation.
- Keep equipment clean. Sanitize your tools, trays and pots with a spray of rubbing alcohol (isopropyl alcohol, 70% concentration) or a 10 % bleach solution of one part bleach to nine parts water.
- OMRI listed biological product with the beneficial bacterium, *Streptomyces lydicus*, may prove helpful.

References:

- University of Maryland [Fusarium Wilt in Basil](#)
- University of Minnesota [Clean and Disinfect Garden Tools and Containers](#)
- NC State University [Basil Problems](#)
- OMRI [Organic Materials Review Institute](#)

SPOTLIGHT

Dragonfly (*Anisoptera*)

Description: Dragonflies are beneficial garden visitors often seen perched on fence posts or plant stems. Despite old myths, dragonflies are completely harmless to people, pets, plants and structures. They are highly beneficial, playing an important part in the aquatic food chain and helping to control mosquitoes, gnats, winged ants and other pests. Fossil evidence shows the existence of dragonflies over 250 million years ago. Dragonflies are native throughout eastern North America. They pass through incomplete metamorphosis with three life stages: egg, aquatic nymph (called naiad) and adult.

Adults are agile, fast-flying generalist predators with large eyes, tiny antennae, two pairs of large and clear membranous wings, which are always held horizontal at rest. Their long, slim bodies may be blue, green, red, bronze, or black. Their bristly legs are used to capture flying insects. Try to catch a photo to see how fast they move!

Adult females lay eggs on or near water. Within three to five weeks, eggs hatch into aquatic nymphs (called naiads). Naiads can live one to several years buried in mud or attached to submerged plants. They use internal gills to breathe and extendible jaws to feed on mosquito larvae and other small aquatic organisms. When naiads are fully grown, they crawl from the water onto aquatic plants. The adult will exit, leaving empty nymphal skins behind. Adults live only about six weeks during which they must mate and females lay eggs to continue their life cycle. Both naiads and adults help naturally reduce mosquito populations. An abundance of dragonflies can be a sign of a healthy ecosystem. Clean water sources, diverse plantings and sheltered sunny areas help attract these beautiful, beneficial insects.

References:

- Iowa State University [Dragonflies and Damselflies](#)
- NC State University [Dragonfly](#)
- University of Connecticut [Beneficial Insects](#)



Figure: Common Whitetail Dragonfly on a garden marker.

Photo: D. Tyson, NJAES



Figure: Blue Dasher Dragonfly perched on a garden marker.

Photo: D. Tyson, NJAES

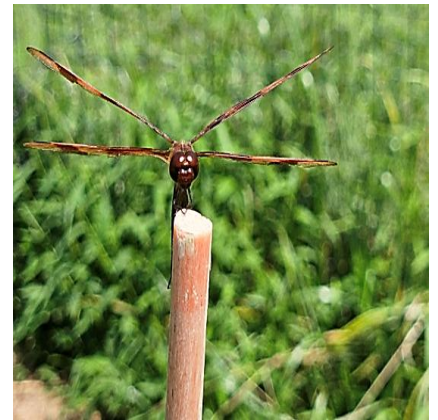


Figure: Halloween Pennant Dragonfly on a garden marker.

Photo: J. Basile, NJAES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

All Rutgers Gardening and Landscaping Fact Sheets & Bulletins [Publications Category \(Rutgers NJAES\)](#)

Rutgers University NJAES [Gardening and Landscaping Fact Sheets & Bulletins](#)

Rutgers University Cooperative Extension [Rutgers Master Gardener Program](#)

Rutgers University Cooperative Extension [Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory](#)

Rutgers University Cooperative Extension [Community Gardening Series](#)

Rutgers University NJAES ONJSC [Office of the New Jersey State Climatologist](#)

Rutgers University NJAES [Rutgers New Jersey Weather Network](#)

Rutgers University Cooperative Extension [Ticks and Tick-borne Disease](#)

Rutgers University NJAES [You Tube Channel](#)

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