

Cucurbits XXX-3

Squash Bugs

Whitney S. Cranshaw & Michael J. Brewer

Note: Cucurbits may be easily injured by formulations of some insecticides. It is often a good precaution to not apply insecticides when foliage is wet. Be sure to check label before using to make sure insecticide will not cause plant injury and/or perform a small-scale test application to verify safety.

Identification (and Life Cycle/Seasonal History)

Dense infestations of squash bugs can occur on winter squashes. These bugs are usually of lesser importance on other cucurbits in our region. Squash bugs overwinter in plant remnants and become active in the late spring/early summer about the time of emergence of host plants. Females lay shiny brown barrel-shaped eggs in masses, one layer thick, on the undersides of leaves. A second generation will occur later in the season, and it is this more abundant generation that can cause serious injury to cucurbits, particularly winter squashes. Adults are gray-black in color and about 25 millimeters (one inch) in length. They have well developed visible piercing-sucking mouthparts, and the head is triangular-shaped when viewed from above.

Plant Response and Damage

Squash bug immatures and adults suck the sap from their host plants and in high densities may cause plant decline. Plants wilt and leaves become blackish when feeding is severe.

Biological Control

Winter mortality of overwintering adults may be high, particularly in the northern areas of our region. Parasitic wasps and flies may assist in natural control of this pest during the growing season.

Chemical Control

Winter squashes are often heavily damaged by squash bugs. When using insecticides, application must be thorough so that leaf undersides are covered. Two treatments, the first initiated at first egg laying and a second application 10 to 14 days later may provide acceptable season-long control.

Note: the following products are registered for winter squash or pumpkin, and may or may not be registered for other cucurbit crops. Check product labeling for usage restrictions.

Product list for Squash Bugs:

Insecticide	Product per acre	Preharvest Interval, Remarks
Ambush 2E ^{R,1} Ambush WP ^{R,1}	6.4-12.8 fl oz 6.4-12.8 oz	1 day. Pyrethroid insecticide. Maximum 1.6 lb (AI)/acre per season.
carbaryl ^{1,2}	1 lb (AI)	0 days. Carbamate insecticide. All formulations except Sevin SLR+ are extremely hazardous to bees. Some rotational restrictions
Endosulfan ²	0.5-1.0 lb	1 day. Chorinated hydrocarbon insecticide. Some rotational restrictions with root crops.
Pounce 3.2EC ^{R,1} Pounce 25WP ^{R,1}	4-8 fl oz (3.2E) 6.4-12.8 oz (25WP)	1 day. Pyrethroid insecticide. Maximum 1.6 lb (AI)/acre per season.
Capture 2E ^{R,1}	2.6 - 6.4 fl oz	3 days. Pyrethroid insecticide. Maximum 0.3 lb (AI)/acre/season.

^RRestricted use pesticide. ¹Labeled for chemigation ²Generic active ingredient, several formulations.

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Categories: Insects, Cucurbits, Cucumber, Melons, Squash, Pumpkins, Squash bugs

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