

Troubleshooting Issues Specific to Particular Plants

Beyond the issues mentioned on previous pages, there are some particular issues that more commonly affect particular vegetables in the LGT garden. If you can't find your issue listed in the pages before, check out these issues for specific plants below.

Cucumbers

Be sure you know what type of cucumbers you are growing in your LGT garden. Without the presence of bees, most cucumbers require manual pollination. They will produce both male and female flowers, and the pollen must be transferred from male to female. The varieties Saber and Diva Hybrid, grown in Little Green Thumbs gardens do not require pollination, as they are a greenhouse variety with only female flowers.

• **Flowers don't set fruit.** If your flowers are not producing fruit, this is likely a pollination issue. The first flowers to appear are male and female flowers appear next. Fruit is produced by female flowers. Wait until female flowers appear, and then assist with pollination by transferring male pollen to the female flower with a paintbrush or Q-tip. Remember most LGT cucumbers, such as Diva Hybrid and Saber, do not require pollination as flowers will be all female.



• **Fruit tastes bitter.** Uneven watering will cause plants to produce bitter compounds that affect taste. Uneven temperatures—swings of temperature by 20°C or more—will do the same. Keep the soil evenly moist and mulch to conserve soil moisture.



Tomatoes

Tomatoes commonly get a wide variety of problems beyond those listed previously. They include:



• **Splitting tomatoes and/or brown scales on the main stems.** This is a sign of water stress. Try to keep the plants more evenly watered.

• **Tomato leaves and stems get weak and floppy.** This can be a sign that your tomatoes are not getting enough light. Position the garden close to a window, make sure the light is close to the plants (without burning them), and prune back the plant, especially the branches that are facing away from the light (see section on “Pruning Tomatoes”).

• **Younger leaves with light colored or yellowish spots.** This can indicate calcium, magnesium and nitrogen deficiencies. Ensure that proper rates of fertilizer and lime have been applied to your garden.

• **Tomatoes may have a dark, rotting spot at one end.** This is called blossom end rot and is a sign of calcium deficiency and is often caused by fluctuations in watering practices. Again, supplement with a calcium/magnesium fertilizer and water regularly.

• **Flowers appear but no fruit.** Even though tomatoes are ‘self-pollinating’ – meaning that their flowers have both female and male parts – they may not be getting stimulus to release their pollen. Try gently tapping the stalk of your tomato, or gently flicking the flower to help pollen drop. Your oscillating fan can also help to shake pollen free to the stigma.

Note: Blossom end rot (when a dark spot appears on the bottom of the tomato fruit) is not a fungal disease and will not respond to fungicides! It will, however, leave that region of the fruit susceptible to local fungi and disease, so remove all tomatoes with this mark. See under “Common Plant Issues” for more control strategies.