



Topic: Stress and Weather Impact Vegetable Gardens

Question: I have a major problem in my back yard vegetable garden. No fruits are produced on the squash, cucumber or eggplant. Three 2 inches yellow squash fruits fell from the plant before developing. I have tried "blossom set" spray but to no avail. We have very few bees for pollination in our area. Could that be the problem? This is a yearly problem, do you have any suggestions? The only crops I get to produced are green beans and tomatoes. Hoping you can assist.

- Jack, North Fort Myers

Answer: Lack of bees to effect pollination is a definite possibility on the squash and cucumber. The eggplant flower, like peppers and tomatoes, is normally wind pollinated, meaning it does not rely on insects like bees and moths to pollinate it. A highly sheltered area like a lanai or enclosed yard may not receive enough wind to physically shake the plants to release pollen. When plants produce flowers but no fruit, it is usually due to one of two issues, stress or weather. Stress, caused by lack of water, high or low temps , high humidity, etc., interferes with pollination and cause the flowers to fall off without producing fruit. A pollination problem can also occur when weather conditions are very hot, wet or humid. Very humid air causes the pollen to become very sticky such that it cannot fall down onto the pistil to pollinate the flower. On the other hand, when the weather is very hot, or cold the pollen is killed or its development adversely affected. If not pollinated in 48 hours, flowers abort. I would suggest two things. Firstly, minimize stress by making sure that the plants are well watered. Secondly, try hand pollination. Take a small, clean paintbrush and move this around the inside of the eggplant flower.

Useful Links

[Stephen's Webpage](#)

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