

Watermelon

Pests

Red Pumpkin Beetle (*Aulacophora foveicollis*):

The pest attacks the melons at the seedling stage. They make holes in cotyledonary leaves of watermelon. As a result the seedlings in the young stage die.

Control: Spraying Carbaryl (4 g/litre of water) or Metacid (1 ml/litre of water) during the seedling stage effectively controls the pest.

Aphids (*Aphis sp.*):

Aphids damage the plants by sucking the leaf sap. In young stage, cotyledonary leaves crinkle and in severe cases the plants wither. The leaves of fully grown vines turn yellow and plant loses its vigour.

Control: The aphids can be easily controlled by spraying Malathion (0.1 %) or Metasystox (0.1-0.2%) or Rogor (0.1-0.2%) sufficiently early before the attack becomes severe. Usually sprays against aphids and beetles can be combined.

Fruit Fly (*Dacus cucurbitae* and *Dacus dorsalis*):

The fly attack is severe, especially after summer rains when the humidity is high. Maggots of this fly causes severe damage to young developing fruits. The adult fly lays eggs in the flowers. The eggs hatch into maggots, which feed inside the fruits and causes rotting.

Control: There is no direct control of maggots because they are inside the developing fruits. The affected fruits should be regularly pinched off and buried in a pit. Spraying of Endosulfan or Thiodan @ 6 ml/4.5 litres of water at the time of flowering partially checks the fly incidence. However, spraying should be done in the evening to prevent the repellent action to pollinating insects like bees from insecticidal sprays.

Mites:

The pest attains serious proportions during summer. Different stages of mite are found in colonies covered by white-silky webs on lower surface of leaves. Nymphs and adults suck cell sap and white patches appear on leaves. Affected leaves become mottled, turn brown and fall.

Control: During egg stage and the resting stages most miticides are ineffective. At high temperatures it may be necessary to apply these at an interval of two days. Acaricides like Dicofol (0.05%) and Wettable Sulphur (0.3%) gives effective control of mites. Cutting and burning of severely infested plant parts reduces further multiplication of mites. Proper ventilation, irrigation and clean cultivation are essential to keep the pest population under control.