

FUNGUS GNAT LARVAE

Adult fungus gnats are not harmful to plants, but larvae use their chewing mouthparts to feed on roots and burrow into plant stems. You will often find fungus gnat larvae on or under the surface of the soil.

IDENTIFICATION OF LARVAE

Size: 1/4 inch

Color: White or transparent body with shiny black head

Fungus gnat larvae are worm-like, without legs. Sometimes they migrate in trains or swarms like the one in the photo to the right. They might do this because their current breeding area gets too dry or if there is a food shortage.



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Fig. 2

SIGNS OF FUNGUS GNAT LARVA INFESTATION

Adult fungus gnats look like small mosquitoes with long legs and antennae. They often rest near plants and fly when disturbed. If you notice a lot of fungus gnats in your system, you probably have a fungus gnat larva problem.



ADULT FUNGUS GNATS
Fig. 3



YELLOW LEAVES
Fig. 4



WILTED PLANTS
Fig. 5

MANAGEMENT

- Place sticky traps beneath affected plants to catch adults and prevent them from reproducing.
- Place a 1/4 inch wedge of potato near the infestation. Within a few days, the larvae will migrate to the potato and away from the plant. The potato and attached larvae can be removed from the system.
- For an advanced infestation, dilute about two teaspoons of 3% hydrogen peroxide per gallon of water in the hydroponic or aquaponic system. Only apply occasionally as this can harm the biofilter of the system.

Figure 1. Roos, D. (Photographer). (May, 2009). *fungus gnat larvae inside stem* [Online image]. Retrieved August 16, 2021 from <https://growing-small-farms.ces.ncsu.edu/growing-small-farms-fungus-gnat/>.

Figure 2. Kay, A. (Photographer). (March 13, 2018). *Fungus gnat larvae, Sciaridae* [Online image]. Retrieved August 16, 2021 from <https://www.flickrriver.com/photos/andreaskay/48079079481/>. Copyright 2018 by Andreas Kay. Reprinted with permission as per <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/>.

Figure 3. Farrell, M. (Photographer). (July 7, 2021). *Fungus Gnat Adult* [Photograph]. Reproduced with permission from the University of MN.

Figure 4. Brooks, L. (Photographer). (September 22, 2016). *leaves, yellowing, symmetry* [Online image]. Retrieved August 16, 2021 from https://pixnio.com/nature-landscapes/leaf-leaves/leaves-yellowing-in-symmetry#img_info. Copyright 2016 by Leon Brooks. Reprinted with permission as per <https://pixnio.com/creativecommons-license>.

Figure 5. Roose, D. (Photographer). (May, 2009). *close-up of wilted seedlings* [Online image]. Retrieved August 16, 2021 from <https://growing-small-farms.ces.ncsu.edu/growing-small-farms-fungus-gnat/>.