



PEST OF THE MONTH

May

Bulb Mites

Bulb mites cause serious damage to many kinds of bulbs, including flower and vegetable bulbs, by eating away the outer layers of shell allowing rotting small organisms to creep in. Bulb mites thrive in wet, cool climates and can affect bulbs both in the soil or while being stored. They survive on any decomposing matter outdoors, so they often have a continuous food source, such as roots, tubers and bulbs. In most cases, bulb mites can be found in clusters.

Bulb mites are shiny, white or creamy; roundish that is 0.5-1.0 mm long. They have four sets of brown legs. Use a hand lens to examine the soil, as they are very difficult to spot.

Hypoaspis are predatory mites that live in the top layer of the soil. They feed on many different types soil pests including bulb mites. Reducing the numbers of the bulb mites will increase the chance of healthy bulbs and protect them from rotting and decaying away. There is nothing more disappointing then seeing the numbers of flower bulbs dwindle. When applying **Hypoaspis** it is important for the soil to be moist but not wet! Apply evenly over the soil that is being treated. It can possibly take a few weeks for the **Hypoaspis** to get established in the soil. So apply early once the temperature is right, about 17-20 degrees. You should only have to apply **Hypoaspis** once as they happily feed on algae and fungal spores when there are no nasty soil pests available. Happy Gardening!

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