

# Profitable INVESTING Tips

## Stock Market Investing Tips, Techniques, and Resources



### Coffee Pests and Diseases

By: [www.BuyOrganicCoffee.org](http://www.BuyOrganicCoffee.org)

There are diseases and pests that can infest a coffee crop and ruin it. Knowing how to prevent or treat these problems is essential for a coffee farmer to avoid financial ruin. The greatest damage to coffee crops comes from pathogenic fungi followed by bacteria or viruses. Some coffee diseases only take hold in weakened fields of coffee and others attack healthy coffee plants. Coffee leaf rust, root rot disease, and coffee berry disease are among those coffee pests and diseases that take hold in otherwise healthy coffee crops.

### Factors That Influence Susceptibility to Coffee Plant Diseases

A major factor that influences coffee plant susceptibility to leaf rust is genetics, the coffee variety. We have written about how many Arabica coffee varieties are susceptible to leaf rust while Robusta is not. Coffee farmers in the Colombian department of Huila use a cross between red and yellow bourbon coffee called [pink bourbon](#) which is not only a great tasting coffee but more resistant to coffee leaf rust. The Colombian Coffee Growers Association has developed strains over the years to preserve the high quality of Colombian Arabica coffees while reducing the damage done by coffee leaf rust.

### Environmental Factors That Affect Coffee Plant Diseases

Historically, Arabica coffees are grown at higher altitudes because the heat and humidity of the lower altitudes in the tropics are conducive to infestations by the coffee borer beetle as well as fungal infestations like leaf rust. A long term concern is that as temperatures rise Arabica strains will need to be planted at higher and higher altitudes until reduced area under cultivation reduces Arabica production and raises prices for even the most standard Arabica crops.

### Coffee Crop Management

Sustainable agricultural practices are essential to help keep coffee crops healthy. Cleaning up decaying plant matter at the base of coffee plants helps reduce the likelihood of fungal infestations as well as insect problems. Proper application of the right fertilizers is important as well. Prompt removal of infected plants helps farmers stay ahead of spreading plant diseases and this practice occasionally requires removal of and burning of whole sections of a coffee farm.

### Economics of Plant Protection

Poor coffee farmers are more likely to be devastated by coffee plant diseases as they cannot afford to pay for the help to deal with problems, buy pesticides when necessary, or fertilize as needed to maintain healthy plants. Their crops may suffer from chronic infestations and perpetuate successive waves of plant diseases for years on end. With more than 900 types of birds, mammals, mollusks, and parasites to worry about on top of viral, bacterial, and fungal diseases the tasks can be overwhelming.

## **The Most Common Coffee Pests**

Insect infestations kill coffee plants, make them prone to secondary infections for fungi and reduce the value of the surviving crop. A prime concern of coffee farmers is the Coffee Berry Borer. This pest is a little black beetle that burrows into the coffee cherry where it is protected from pesticides. The pest causes the cherry to fall from the plant and surviving berries are small and of poor quality.

The Coffee Leaf Miner is a kind of moth. They eat coffee plant leaves. When enough leaves are killed the plant cannot photosynthesize and grow. Berries do not mature and yield is drastically reduced. And, when diseased beans make into the cupping stage they taste bitter.

## **Mealybugs**

Mealybugs feed on many different plants where they attack roots, flowers, nodes, and leaves. They feed on the sap of the coffee plant and in turn secrete a sticky sweet material that attracts ants. A black mold then covers the plant cutting off photosynthesis. Many coffee plants die and the ones that survive produce bitter coffee.

These are just a few of the pests that attack coffee and make the coffee grower's life a chore.

For more insights and useful information about organic coffee, visit [www.BuyOrganicCoffee.org](http://www.BuyOrganicCoffee.org)

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