

Control garden pests the green way

Keep the bugs and slugs away without doing damage to your garden or to the natives. Find out how to fight some of the more common garden invaders using really scary stuff like milk, tea, beer, lemons or water.

LEAF DISEASES

Chamomile spray - Brew a pot of everyday chamomile tea and leave it to cool. Once cool simply spray it on plants every few days to protect plants against mildew, rust, stem rot, leaf spot and other fungal diseases.

Milk spray - use a spray of equal parts milk and water every few days to help plants fight off powdery mildew.

Nettle spray - wearing gloves, soak 300g of nettles in 3 litres of water for 3 weeks. Dilute the water when spraying your garden. This spray will help with powdery mildew, aphids and bean fly. It is also a good general fertiliser as nettles are rich in iron and nitrogen.

ANTS AND APHIDS

Chilli pepper spray - this is great for controlling ants, aphids and other soft-bodied insects (just be aware that this spray can look attractive to smaller kids so keep it out of their reach, and always wear gloves and a mask when spraying this one). Blend a handful of fresh chillies in 1 litre of water. Add 1 teaspoon of pure soap, then strain and spray.

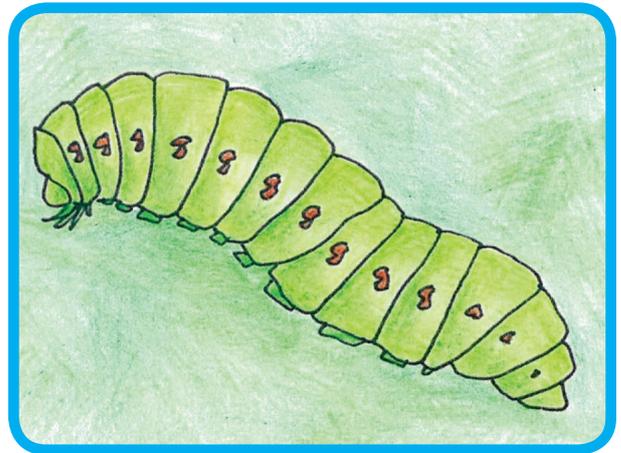
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Soap spray - make up a base of liquid using 1 tablespoon of environmentally friendly dishwashing liquid to 1 cup of oil. When you want to spray, dilute 2 teaspoons of the base in 1 cup of oil and spray to both the upper and lower sides of plants affected with aphids.

Ladybirds - apparently one single ladybird can eat 400 aphids in a week! And they still have room to try out a few other leaf-eating insects. To attract ladybirds and other helpful bugs plant a diverse garden with flowering companions, and leave logs and chunks of wood around the garden to attract the ground dwelling garden-friendly bugs.

EARWIGS

Hose - the easiest way to get rid of earwigs is to place a piece of empty hose in the garden. The earwigs will congregate in the hose, which you can then pick up and empty someplace else.



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SNAILS AND SLUGS

Citrus skins – Halved orange, lemon or grapefruit skins left upturned in the garden will trap snails and slugs. You will still need to kill the snails and slugs though – feed them to the chooks maybe?

Egg-shells – dried and crushed egg-shells (you should try to crush them quite fine using a mortar and pestle) scattered around new seedlings will keep snails and slugs away and they don't like slithering across the rough shells.



Handpicking – it can be gross but the best way of controlling snails, slugs and caterpillars is to pick them off the plants. You will also need to kill them. Squash them if you can, step on them, or feed them to the chooks.

Beer Traps – place beer in a covered container that is dug into the ground. Leave space for the slugs to enter at ground level. The slugs cannot resist the beer and drown a glorious death in your homemade beer trap. The beer goes mouldy after a few days so you will need to toss it out (with the drowned slugs) and replace with fresh beer by day four.

CATERPILLARS

Garlic spray – chop 100g of garlic, cover with vegetable oil and leave to soak overnight. Strain the garlic out of the oil and add the oil to 1 litre of soapy water. Store it in a glass jar with a tightly sealed lid (as it may pong a little). When you want to use it to spray your plants, dilute 1 part of your garlic and soap mix with 10 parts of water. Caterpillars, aphids, thrips and cabbage butterflies find the smell so disgusting that they stay well away.

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Pepper/Cayenne pepper – sprinkled on the wet leaves of plants will discourage caterpillars.

LEAF EATING BUGS

Sticky traps – a sticky trap is a good way of catching the bugs that fly around eating plants. However, they can also catch the good bugs that you want in your garden. If you use them at night you will avoid catching some of the good ones, like bees. Just remember to bring them in early in the morning. Spread treacle onto pieces of cardboard and leave them in the garden overnight.

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For more information on how you can help our environment, or to make some suggestions of your own, please go to www.coolaustralia.org



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LIZARDS

Don't be frightened if you come up against a lizard in the garden. In fact you should be happy! Lizards will eat you snails, grasshoppers and beetles. Give them a hollow log to live in and they should be happy.



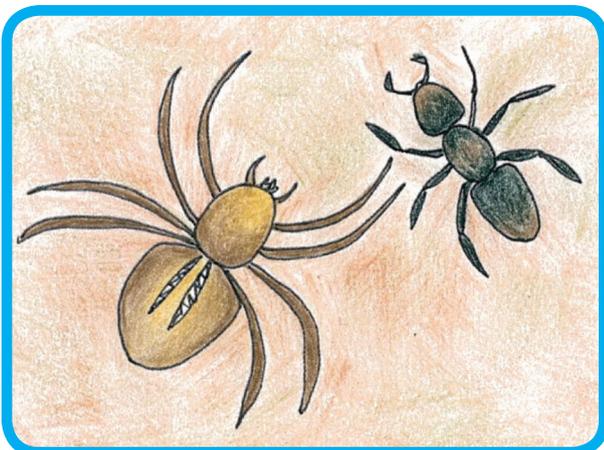
WORMS

You want worms in your garden – they are a gardener's friend. They aerate the soil with their tunnelling and they help organic matter in the garden break down, so releasing important nutrients to keep your soil healthy.

You could consider buying a worm farm for your garden. You can feed your worms food scraps and in return they will give you beautiful compost and worm wee that can be diluted to a ratio of 1 part to 9 parts water and then used as a fertiliser for your garden.

FERTILISER

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For more information on green garden pest control tips, visit the following websites:

Sustainable Gardening Australia - Pests:

<http://www.sgaonline.org.au/?tag=pests&orderby=title&order=asc>

Gardening Australia - Pests, Diseases and Weeds:

http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/pests_diseases_weeds.htm

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