

# Lets ditch the chemicals and still deter those pesky bugs – and weeds!!

**Disaster-proof your garden through plant diversity. The wider the range of plants, the less they are plagued by pests, so that if a disease or pest occurs only a limited number of susceptible plants will be affected.**

**For example, if you want to get rid of slugs, can you attract more birds? If you need to get rid of aphids, could you plant angelica, fennel and dill nearby to attract ladybirds? There are lots of different companion planting ideas that will help you to reduce pests in your plot. By creating a balanced garden, you will find that you have less and less need for bug sprays.**

**I hope these ideas for safe, homemade organic garden concoctions are helpful. By having just a handful of inexpensive items on hand, you can take care of most common gardening dilemmas in your own green way -- and without involving any nasty chemicals!**

## Bug Sprays

Avoid using any spray on your plants during the heat of the day as the exposure to the sun can cause leaf burn.

### 1. Tomato Leaf Spray

Tomato leaf spray is effective for killing aphids and mites. It works because the alkaloids in the tomato leaves (and the leaves of all nightshades, actually) are fatal to many insects. Simply soak 2 cups of chopped tomato leaves in 2 cups of water overnight. Strain the liquid the next day and discard the leaves. Add 2 more cups of water to the mixture and spray it on your plants.

### 2. Garlic Oil Spray

Garlic oil spray is a great, safe insect repellent. Simply put three to four cloves of minced garlic into 2 teaspoons of vegetable oil. Let the mixture sit overnight, and then strain the garlic out of the oil. Add the oil to 1 pint of water, and add 1 teaspoon of biodegradable washing up liquid. Store in a bottle or jar, and dilute the mixture when you use it by adding 2 tablespoons of your garlic oil mixture to one pint of water.

This mixture works because the compounds in garlic (namely, diallyl disulfide and diallyl trisulfide) are irritating or deadly to certain pests (mostly insects). The oil and soap help the mixture stick to plant leaves. What insects does garlic oil repel? Whiteflies, aphids and most beetles will avoid plants sprayed with garlic oil. A word of caution: Don't apply this spray on a sunny day, because the oils can cause foliage to burn.



### 3. Hot Pepper Spray

Hot pepper spray is a great solution if you have problems with mites. Simply mix 2 tablespoons of hot pepper sauce, a few drops of biodegradable washing up liquid and 1ltr of water and let it sit overnight. Use a spray bottle to apply the spray to infested plants.

Hot pepper spray works because the compound capsaicin, which causes the "heat" in hot peppers, is just as irritating to insects as it is to us (if you've ever sliced a hot pepper and gotten any of it in an open cut, you'll understand). This mixture also helps repel whiteflies, but it may have to be reapplied if you start to see the mites or whiteflies returning.



### 4. Soap Spray

Simple soap spray is useful in taking out a wide variety of common household pests, including aphids, scale, mites, and thrips. Just add 1 tablespoon of washing up liquid to 4 Ltrs. of water and spray the mixture on the pests.

Why does this method have guaranteed results? The soap dissolves the outer coating or shell of the insects, eventually killing them.



### 5. Beer

Sink a tin can or deep dish into the ground and add a couple of inches of beer, up to about 1 inch (2.5 centimetres) below the top of the container. Beer works because the slugs are attracted to the yeast.

It's really important to sink the container into the soil and keep the beer about an inch lower than the soil. This way, the slugs have to go down after the beer, and they drown. If the beer is near the soil, the slugs can just have a drink and then go and munch on your plants anyway.



### 6. Citrus Fruit as Slug Traps

If you don't have beer in the house, but you do have oranges, grapefruits or lemons, give this a try. You don't even need to create a spray — place half a citrus fruit that has had the juice squeezed out, cut side down on the ground. In the morning you can collect the slugs and snails that are hiding inside.



### 7. Newspaper Earwig Traps

Newspaper earwig traps work well for reducing the population of these sometimes-pesky insects. Just roll up a newspaper and secure it with an elastic band. Dunk it in water to get it wet and lay it in the garden between problem plants. Check the trap daily and dunk the newspaper rolls into a bucket of water to remove the bugs.

### 8. Cinnamon or Cayenne Pepper

Ground cinnamon or cayenne pepper sprinkled around your plants works by repelling, but not injuring, ants. This approach works just as well for ensuring a bug free home.

### 9. Red Pepper Spray

Red pepper spray works well for making your plants less tasty to mammal and bird pests. If rabbits, deer, mice, squirrels or birds are regularly messing with your garden, make the following mixture and spray target plants weekly.

Mix 4 tablespoons of Tabasco sauce, 1 Ltr of water, and 1 teaspoon of washing up liquid. The capsaicin in the pepper spray will irritate the animal pests, and they'll look for less spicy fare elsewhere. At the very least, it's a much safer deterrent than pesticides, which could harm mammals.





## Fungal Disease Solutions

### 10. Baking Soda Spray

Baking soda spray is a tried-and-true method for preventing powdery mildew. It needs to be applied weekly, but if you have a problem with mildew in your garden, it will be well worth the time. Simply combine 1 tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda, 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil, 1 tablespoon of washing up liquid and 4 litres of water and spray it on the foliage of susceptible plants.

Bicarbonate of soda spray works because it disrupts fungal spores, preventing them from germinating. The oil and soap help the mixture stick to plant leaves.

### 11. Milk

Mix up a spray that is 40 percent milk and 60 percent water and simply spray it on both sides of the leaves of the affected plants. The milk works just as well as toxic fungicides at preventing powdery mildew. This mixture will need to be reapplied regularly, but it works wonderfully.



## Weed Treatments

### 12. Vinegar

Vinegar works very well for getting rid of weeds in your lawn and garden. The main issue with vinegar is that it can harm other plants. Try using a foam paintbrush to brush the vinegar directly onto the leaves of weeds you're trying to kill. This prevents the vinegar from getting onto other plants and ensures that the entire leaf surface is coated with the vinegar.

### 13. Boiling Water

Boil some water and pour it over weeds in the cracks of your paving slabs. Most weeds can't stand up to this treatment, and your problem is solved. Just be careful when pouring!

### 14. Vinegar and Salt

If you have some really stubborn weeds, try using 2 litres of white vinegar mixed with 150g of salt. Also mix 2 teaspoons of washing up liquid into the solution, as it won't stick to the surface of the weeds otherwise. Please note that this concoction will kill just about any plant it comes in contact with, so keep it away from your other plants, as well as your lawn.

## The Best Homemade Garden Concoction of All

### 15. Compost

Compost adds nutrients, improves soil structure, increases moisture retention and increases the number of beneficial microbes in your soil. And that's all besides preventing organic matter from making its way to the landfill.