



Organic Garden Remedies

Homemade remedies are a longstanding tradition among organic gardeners, who have had to be creative in finding ways to battle insects and other issues without the help of synthetic chemicals

To keep slugs and snails at bay:

Garlic Wash Recipe

Well, here it is. Much requested and sought after - top secret you know...

Ingredients:

2 Bulbs Garlic
2 Pints Water

Instructions:

Crush 2 bulbs of garlic
Steam or boil in 2 pints of water for 3 to 4 minutes until blanched
Strain mixture and make back up to 2 pints
Leave to cool

When ready to use, mix one tablespoon in five litres of water and sprinkle on to leaves in late afternoon (in dry weather). Re-apply every two weeks.

The mixture will apparently dry on the leaves making them rather unappealing to slugs and snails!

To Deter the Pesky Aphid

In the case of fighting aphids, two homemade sprays have proven very effective in controlling aphid infestations: tomato leaf spray or garlic oil spray. While knowing how to make and use them is important, it's equally important to understand why they work.

Tomato Leaf Spray

Tomato plants, as members of the nightshade family, contain toxic compounds called alkaloids in their leaves. When the leaves of tomato plants are chopped, they release their alkaloids. When the alkaloids are suspended and diluted with water, they make an easy-to-use spray that is toxic to aphids, but still safe around plants and humans.

To make tomato leaf spray, simply chop one or two cups of tomato leaves and soak them in two cups of water. Let it steep overnight. Strain out the leaves using cheesecloth or a fine strainer, then add another one to two cups of water to the liquid and add it to a spray bottle.

To use the mixture, spray the stems and foliage of the infested plant and pay particular attention to the undersides of leaves since that is where aphids most commonly congregate. One word of caution,



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while this spray is safe for humans, some people are allergic to nightshade plants and tomatoes. If you are sensitive to nightshade plants, use care in making and applying this spray.

Garlic Oil Spray

Organic gardeners have long relied on garlic as part of their pest-fighting arsenal. Garlic contains sulphur, which, besides being toxic to pests, is also an antibacterial and antifungal agent. The dish soap in this mixture also breaks down the bodies of soft-bodied insects causing dehydration and death. **It is not selective – be aware that beneficial insects will also be affected.**

To make **garlic oil spray**, mince, or finely chop three to four cloves of garlic, and add them to two teaspoons of mineral oil. Let this mixture sit for 24 hours. Strain out the garlic pieces, and add the remaining liquid to one pint of water. Add one teaspoon of washing up liquid. This mixture can be stored and diluted as needed.

Before using this spray test it by spraying an inconspicuous part of the plant. If there are no signs of yellowing or other leaf damage after a day or two, it is safe to use. If there is leaf damage, dilute the mixture with more water and try the test again. Once you have determined that it will not harm your plant, spray the entire plant, paying particular attention to the undersides of leaves.

Non-oily spray can be made by chopping one or two complete garlic bulbs and covering with boiling water in a lidded jar. Leave it to soak overnight. Strain through muslin or cheesecloth and add to one litre of water pre-mixed with 30ml of liquid soap (from a health food shop – brand detergents could harm your plants)

A word of caution about these sprays, garlic oil is a non-selective insecticide. **It will kill beneficial insects** (such as ladybirds, which are natural predators of aphids) just as easily as it kills the bad guys. It is best to keep as many beneficial insects around as possible. This spray should only be used if you have not seen any beneficial bugs in your garden. Otherwise, you should use the tomato leaf recipe, which will not harm beneficial bugs.

Do not use metallic containers as it will react with the mixture. Garlic spray does not keep, but can be frozen.

Other Natural Methods of Aphid Removal

Sometimes, a strong blast of water from the hose will knock the aphids off of a plant and solve the problem. Just make sure the water is not too strong that it uproots the plant or overwaters it.

Try to attract beneficial insects like ladybirds, lacewings, parasitic wasps, or damsel flies to your garden. They will attack the aphids. Planting mint, fennel, dill, achillea, as well as many other plants will help attract these beneficial predators to your garden.



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Ant control and deterrent

Cinamon powder will deter ants, so if it is sprinkled at the entrance to their nest, they will move away.

If you prefer to be more brutal, you can use Boric Acid (Borax) - a mild acidic powder which is the main ingredient in many proprietary products. It kills crawling insects by attacking their nervous system and causes dehydration - it can be mixed with an equal amount of icing sugar and sprinkled around as an ant bait.

Cat Repellent

This mixture can be sprinkled around flowerbeds to discourage cats:

2 parts cayenne pepper

3 parts dry mustard powder

5 parts flour

Squirrel Repellent

Mix chilli powder with bird food. Due to a quirk of nature birds do not suffer from the same painful reaction that mammals do, so are immune to the effect.

Fungicides

Just like there are beneficial insects in the garden that we cannot live without, there are beneficial fungi that we rely on for the health of our living world. Mycorrhizal fungi is essential for the health and uptake of nutrients for 95% of plants.

Be mindful when using any corrective measures.

Mildew Spray

5g (about a teaspoonful) Sodium Bicarbonate (baking soda) to 1 Litre water

Blackspot And Mildew On Roses

3 teaspoonsful (3 x 5ml spoonsful) of Sodium Bicarbonate

1 heaped teaspoon of soluble fertilizer

a few drops of washing-up liquid (from a health food shop)

Mix and dissolve in a cupful (200ml) of water, then make up to a 4.5l in a watering can to be watered



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over the foliage every two weeks, starting in early spring and continuing throughout the growing season.

Milk Spray

The enzymes in a 10 to 30% solution of fresh milk sprayed on plants will attack mildew or could result in a more friendly fungus that grows and out-competes the mildew.

NB: A stronger solution will result in a foul smell as the milk goes rancid.