

Got Ants?

Tips For Reducing Pesticide Use in Your Garden

Spring is here, and you might not be the only one excited to get back into your garden. Whether it's weeds, bugs, rodents, or other pests, your garden may be experiencing some unwanted visitors. Before you reach for a pesticide, consider these tips to care for your outdoor space without using harmful chemicals. Reducing pesticide use can save you money and help protect our local waterways!

Garden Maintenance Tips to Prevent Pests

One of the best ways to manage pests is to prevent them from settling in your garden in the first place. You can do this by removing things that attract pests, such as food, water and shelter.

Here's how:

- Remove trash and yard waste— Trash and decaying plant material often attract insects and rodents. Remove and properly dispose of any trash or yard waste.
- Use physical barriers— Row covers, hot caps, and other plant cages can help keep pests away from sensitive young plants. Sticky barriers, copper barriers, and raised beds are other options that can help protect garden plants.
- Remove Standing Water— Standing water can encourage the growth of mold and algae, become a nursery for insect larvae, and attract unwanted animals looking for drinking water. Be sure to remove standing water to reduce the chances of pests turning your yard into their home.
- Plant SMART— Planting strategies, such as selecting appropriate types of plants, alternating plant patterns, and adding ground cover (like mulch) can deter pests. For more information about planting strategies, visit Ourwaterour-world.org/healthy-garden



Friend or Foe: Beneficial Insects

Most bugs are friends, not foes! In fact, 97% of the insects you see are considered good. These are called "beneficial insects" because they benefit your garden by pollinating your plants, improving the soil, and eating the pests that harm your garden. How can you invite more friends to your garden? Here are a few tips to identify and attract beneficial insects:

- Find your Friends—Many insects are natural enemies of common pests; you just might not recognize them! Find out who your friends are by learning how to identify beneficial insects. An insect can look dramatically different during each stage of its life cycle, such as egg, larva, pupa and adult. It is important to know what the good bugs: such as bees, ladybugs, soldier beetles, and green lacewings, look like in their various life stages.



- Plant for Success— By planting native plants that are high in pollen and rich in nectar, you can increase the likelihood that beneficial bugs will find your garden welcoming and stick around.
- Use Pesticides as a Last Resort—While pesticides can control pests efficiently, they will also likely harm or kill the beneficial bugs. If pests are present in your yard, first try and preventative measures, to ensure your gardening strategies are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Did you know?

The stores where you buy pesticides can help you choose a less-toxic option! Next time you're shopping for pest control products, look for "point-of-purchase" signs, such as shelf edging or tags, as well as display stands with fact sheets, banners, and other education materials. Our Water, Our World is one program that provides these materi-