

Organic Remedies for Garden Pests

From Mother Earth News

Pest	No-spray Options	Top Product Choices
Aphids	Row covers; beneficial insects including ladybeetles, lacewings and syrphid flies; reflective mulches	Insecticidal soap, diatomaceous earth, horticultural oil
Armyworms	Row covers; beneficial insects including braconids and other small wasps	Bt, spinosad, kaolin clay
Asparagus beetles	Predation by poultry; winter cleanup of debris	Spinosad
Cabbage loopers	Row covers; handpicking; predation by birds	Bt or spinosad
Cabbageworms	Row covers; handpicking; predation by birds	Bt or spinosad
Colorado potato beetles	Resistant varieties; row covers; straw mulch; crop rotation; handpicking	Spinosad
Corn earworms	Resistant corn varieties with tight husk tips; early planting	Bt, spinosad or vegetable oil applied to young ear tips
Corn borers	Good end-of-season cleanup of debris; parasitic wasps	Bt, spinosad (alternating use)
Cucumber beetles	Row covers; handpicking; vacuuming; trapping in yellow pails filled with water or with yellow sticky traps	Kaolin clay
Cutworms	Surface cultivation; weed reduction; rigid collars around seedling stems	Bt, kaolin clay, beneficial nematodes
Fire ants	Check garden weekly for new mounds and treat as needed	Spinosad
Flea beetles	Row covers; reflective mulch	Spinosad
Grasshoppers	Poultry; good fall cleanup to dislodge overwintering eggs	Nosema locustae protozoa, applied to habitat areas in late spring

Japanese beetles	Row covers; handpicking; parasitic wasps	Milky spore, beneficial nematodes
Leafhoppers	Ladybeetles, lacewings and other beneficial insects	Neem, kaolin clay, diatomaceous earth
Mexican bean beetle	Scout twice weekly; handpick adults, eggs and larvae; release beneficial <i>Pediobius</i> wasps	Neem
Spider mites	Encourage beneficial insects; use strong water spray to wash undersides of leaves	Insecticidal soap applied in late afternoon or early evening
Slugs and snails	No evening watering; handpicking; trapping; ground beetles and other natural predators; reduced mulching; clean cultivation	Sand, diatomaceous earth, copper barriers, iron sulfate baits (restricted use in some certified organic operations)
Squash bugs	Row covers; handpicking; trapping under boards at night; growing non-preferred varieties; prompt composting of debris	Neem
Squash vine borers	Resistant varieties (butternuts); row covers; surgical removal; composting of all debris	Beneficial nematodes
Tarnished plant bugs (Lygus bugs)	Close mowing near plantings; vacuuming; row covers; trap cropping with alfalfa	<i>Beauvaria bassianafungus</i>
Tent caterpillars	Tear nests open with a stick every few days	Late night applications of Bt or spinosad
Thrips	Grow flowers to provide pollen and nectar for beneficial insects; reflective mulches	Kaolin clay, <i>Beauvaria</i> fungus, insecticidal soap
Tomato fruitworm (same species as corn earworm)	Encourage beneficial insects and wild birds; handpick	Bt or spinosad
Tomato hornworm	Scout twice weekly starting in early summer; handpick	Bt or spinosad
Whiteflies	Wash off with water; yellow sticky traps; reflective mulches	Neem, insecticidal soap, horticultural oil