

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

Defend Your Garden With Herbs – 5 Steps to Stop Pests

Excerpts from “The Herb Companion” July 2008

May 21, 2008

You’ve coddled your seedlings, nourished your soil, and provided a cozy habitat for beneficial birds and insects. Yet by early to midsummer, an explosion of aphids, Japanese beetles or some other insect pest threatens to destroy not only your serenity, but also your garden’s beauty and bounty.

The good news is you can stop these insect invaders without turning to dangerous pesticides. Following these five steps almost always does the trick.

1) Scout out and identify pests

If you have trouble identifying what you’re seeing, contact your County Extension Agent or go to <http://paipm.cas.psu.edu/386.htm>, which has photos and information on 25 common garden pests. Remember that not all insects are pests – ladybugs, lacewings and praying mantises are beneficial predators that help control pests.

2) Destroy pests in their vulnerable larval stage.

Begin with the least toxic way of destroying the pests – a strong spray of water. Spray the entire plant, side to side and top to bottom – as well as the top and bottom of leaves – until the plant is completely clean. The best time to spray water (or any control product) is in the cool of the day when plants are not in direct sunlight.

Besides using a water bath to stop pests you can also use a homemade garlic-chile-soap spray (see recipe below). After spraying the plants with water follow up with the garlic-chile-soap spray every three to five days until the pest is gone.

3) Establish a control routine and record applications.

4) Keep your garden clean (that includes pots, tools and work surfaces, too).

5) Remove and dispose of dying and dead leaves on plants and the soil.

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Garlic and Chile Insecticidal Soap Spray

Makes about 3 cups concentrate

10-12 large cloves of garlic

4-6 hot chile peppers, dried or fresh

2 cups water

1 tablespoon biodegradable liquid dishwashing soap

Optional: 10 drops cinnamon, vetiver or eucalyptus essential oil

- 1) Put garlic, chiles and water into a blender and puree contents until foamy.
- 2) Let mixture stand at least 2 hours or overnight. When mixture settles, you will have a coral-colored liquid with sediment at the bottom.
- 3) Pour through a strainer lined with fine cheesecloth (or through a coffee filter or jelly bag) to remove particles that could block the sprayer valve.
- 4) Pour concentrate into a jar with plastic lid (not metal), add soap (and essential oil, if desired), stir and label.
- 5) Store in a cool, dark place until needed, up to a few months. For a 1-quart or 1-liter spray bottle, use 2 tablespoons concentrate and fill the rest of the bottle with water.
- 6) Spray plants late in the day, so hot sun can't burn the plants. Cover the top and bottom of leaves. Re-apply as often as needed, but allow several days between applications.