

Pests

First off, many insects in the garden are NOT pests and they will help your garden. It is beneficial to learn which insects are pests, about their habitat, what they feed on and their life cycle – this can help you figure out how to manage them.

How to manage pests:

1. Maintain healthy plants. Plants under stress are more likely to be attacked. Check the fertility of the soil and fertilize when necessary. Do not plant too close together.
2. Rotate crops!
3. Choose recommended varieties for the area.
4. Sanitation. Some pests overwinter in weeds or plant debris. Remove weeds and mulches where insects, slugs, and snails may reside.
5. Do not bring insect infested plants into your garden.
6. Consider time of planting.
7. Handpick the pests off of plants.
8. Some insects can be controlled by physical barriers:
 - a. Cardboard collars four inches high and placed around young transplants
 - b. Row cover! Make sure not to keep row covers on during the hottest part of the summer. Also, some plants need to be insect pollinated or there will be no crop. These covers let in light and water and still allow the plants to grow.
9. Mulches

Some Pests:

-Whitefly:

Small insects with four powdery, white wings.

They are sucking insects that eat plant sap which causes plants to weaken. Try to catch them at an early stage. A successful way to manage them is with yellow sticky boards. They are attracted to the color yellow and will adhere to the boards.

-Aphids:

Small, slow moving insects that suck juice from plants. They vary in color, have a pear-shaped body and long antennae. They are often found in numbers on the underside of plants.

Aphids suck juices from the plants, leading to distortion and reduction in yield.

Ladybird beetles and lacewings will take care of the aphids for you. A hard stream of water will remove aphids from plants.

-Rose Chafer Beetle:

These beetles come around in late May and early June for three or four weeks. They feed on flowers and new fruit. Hand picking is the best method of getting rid of them.

-Japanese Beetle:

Japanese beetles feed on leaves, flowers, or fruits – usually in groups. They feed in May, June, September and October. The grubs feed on grass roots. Handpicking will relieve small plants but insecticides will control the problem.

-Slugs and Snails:

Slugs and snails are around most of the summer. They chew holes in leaves, stems, flowers, and fruit. They need humidity to move, so by staking or caging plants the air circulates and the plants dry, making them less likely to be attacked. You can put overturned grapefruit skins and old boards in the garden. During the hot part of the day they will go under them and you can handpick and destroy them. Diatomaceous earth can also be used. A home remedy is to place one inch of stale beer in shallow pans throughout the garden. Slugs are attracted to the beer and will climb in and drown.

Source: Cornell Cooperative Extension