

# Organic Pest Control

Even a healthy garden will at times attract a range of pests or diseases. Many are seasonal, some are opportunistic but all are a nuisance when they destroy your favourite garden produce. While it is tempting to declare war and bring out an arsenal of pesticides, it is better for your health and the environment if we can minimise the use of harmful chemicals in the garden.

Fortunately there are quite a few practices you can adopt that will help reduce the impact of pests and diseases in your garden.

Healthy plants can protect themselves, provided they grow in the right conditions (sun or shade), in healthy soil and appropriately watered.

Check the micro-climate. Many fungal diseases occur when there is too much shade, poor ventilation due to plants being too close together or more vigorous plants out compete weaker plants.

Get close to your plants and regularly check them for emerging pest and disease problems.

Set tolerance levels unless pest problems are at an unacceptable level. Accept that some losses and blemishes are normal in a chemical free garden.

Practice a range of techniques – grow companion plants, net fruit trees, manually remove pests and weeds and encourage biodiversity in the garden.

Consider purchasing some beneficial insects e.g. green lacewings that devour aphids and whitefly.

Home remedies can be effective. e.g. milk spray can be used to combat powdery mildew; beer traps for slugs/ snails or; linseed oil for earwigs.



Many insects in the garden such as ladybirds are good guys that will eat pests such as aphids. If you overuse chemicals you may also kill beneficial insects and make your pest problem harder to control. Multi-sprays in particular kill anything they touch.

Too much fertiliser makes plants produce a lot of leafy growth that often becomes a target for pests.

When a plant looks sick the worst thing you can do is feed it a synthetic fertiliser.

Sterilise your secateurs with methylated spirits between pruning plants to prevent the spread of disease.



Sometimes, even in the best of gardens – THINGS GO WRONG! Don't panic... help is at hand! The most important thing is to accurately identify the problem. Your local garden centre can help or visit [www.SGAonline.org.au](http://www.SGAonline.org.au) for further information on common pests and diseases.