

Reduce  Reuse  Recycle

Naturally!



Natural Recipes for Around the House and Yard

We can protect our homes and environment by using safe alternatives to common toxic household products, such as pesticides and household cleaners. While promoting a healthy home and environment, using safe alternatives also reduces the potential for exposing our families to unnecessary health risks.

So how to get started? Use the natural recipes below to help you get started!

HINT: When you finish using your newest “concoction”, be sure to label homemade mixtures with the date, contents and recommended use.

Safe Tips for a Pest-Free Garden

Garden pests are tough to get rid of once they call your yard “home,” so think about keeping them away before you plant. Prevent disease and pests in your garden by selecting healthy plants for a garden that promotes a diverse and balanced ecosystem. You should choose plants suited for your yard’s particular growing conditions as well as the region’s climate.

If those pesky critters do make their way into your backyard oasis, try the following safe, non-toxic recipes for dealing with them.

INSECT PESTS

Please note: Treat only the plants that are infested with pests and only when absolutely necessary. Insecticides, whether natural or synthetic, kill the “helpful” insects that are needed for a health yard and plants.

Bye, bye aphid, whitefly, and mites

To get rid of these pests, mix one Tbsp. of liquid hand soap with one cup of vegetable oil. One Tbsp. of mixture can be mixed with one qt. of water to make a spray that can kill soft-bodied insects. Avoid using spray on sensitive plants or on hot days.

To keep aphids off your roses and tomatoes, finely chop one onion and two medium cloves of garlic. Add two cups of water and mix together in a blender on high. Strain out pulp and pour liquid into a spray bottle. Spray a fine mist on bushes, making sure to coat both tops and bottoms of leaves.

So long, sugar ants!

To keep ants out of your garden, sprinkle concentrated lemon juice around the whole garden area. (Other insects will stay away as well.)

Keep on truckin', slugs!

To keep slugs away from your plants, sprinkle diatomaceous earth around them. Diatomaceous earth is a powdery substance which consists of crushed shells of tiny critters, and is ecologically safe and non-poisonous to man and beast. ***But be careful not to breathe in the fine dust as it may irritate your lungs.*** You can find diatomaceous earth at your local nursery. Also, pesky sweet gum balls strewn around the base of plants will do the trick. Slugs don't like the sharp edges.

Bug off, brown recluse spiders!

Brown Recluse Spiders have small violin-shaped markings on their backs and are one of Missouri's venomous spiders. The bites from these spiders may produce deep, open wounds that are slow to heal. These spiders prefer to hide in little-used drawers, closets and other small hiding places. Cardboard boxes are favorite spots, too. To get rid of these spiders:

- Vacuum their preferred hiding places, remove cardboard boxes and use plastic totes or bags for storage.
- During warm weather, remove or steer clear of wood piles around the house.
- Set out sticky glue traps in attic or basement areas.

WEEDS and DISEASES

Stop diseases from spreading in your soil

Use fermented compost tea (DO NOT DRINK!!). Make your solution by steeping 1 part compost to 5-8 parts water for 3-7 days. Strain through a fine screen and spray liquid to around plant stem and soil for soil-borne disease and on the leaves for powdery mildew.

Nasty fungus

Make a baking soda spray with 1 tsp. baking soda, 1 drop detergent, 1 tbsp. canola oil, and 1 gallon water. Spray on affected plant parts for powdery mildew.

Mulch those weeds

No spraying needed here! Use mulch (from your home compost pile!) in flower beds and around trees to suppress weeds and other uninvited plants.

Vinegar not just for salad

Typical white vinegar bought from the store (95 percent water and 5 percent vinegar) can be used to kill many weeds. A spray of vinegar on the leaves of young weeds (up to 2 weeks old) causes them to turn brown and die. Older weeds may need a stronger vinegar solution or several applications directed at their roots to finish them off. This vinegar treatment may harm desirable plants too. Protect other plants by carefully spot treating weeds and avoiding run-off to other areas that you don't want to treat.

Other helpful tips:

- Intersperse your flowers and vegetables with "helpful" plants, such as onions, garlic, and chives.
- Place some "helpful" bugs in your garden, such as ladybugs and praying mantises. Both are usually available at specialty garden supply stores.

Think Clean...and Safe!

General household cleaner

Mix the following to create cleaning solution:

- One tsp. of liquid soap (castile peppermint)
- One tsp. borax
- One qt. of water
- One squeeze of lemon

Oven cleaner

Mix baking soda, salt and water (make a paste). Apply and scrub off with a copper scrubber.

Drain cleaner

Pour ½ cup baking soda into the drain, followed by ½ cup white vinegar. Cover tightly for 15 minutes; then flush with boiling water. Repeat if necessary. A mechanical snake may be needed to clear hair-clogged drains. For standing water, use plunger or snake.

Need More Info?

The Internet is chocked full of safe alternatives to many household chemicals. Check out the following websites for more ideas on how to have a healthy, toxic-free home.

YARD and GARDEN

- OrganicGardening.com: www.organicgardening.com
- Cornell University, Biological Control, Guide to Natural Enemies in North America: www.nysaes.cornell.edu/ent/biocontrol
- National Science Foundation, Center for Integrated Pest Management, Biological Control Virtual Information Center: cipm.ncsu.edu/ent/biocontrol
- Integrated Pest Management Project, University of California Statewide: www.ipm.ucdavis.edu
- United States Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov/ebtpages/pesticides.html and click on "Citizen's Guide to Pest Control and Pesticide Safety"
- Missouri Botanical Garden: www.mobot.org
- USDA - Agricultural Research Service: www.ars.usda.gov/is/kids/weirdscience/story8/textonly.htm

HOUSEHOLD

University of Missouri, Office of Waste Management, Household Hazardous Waste Project: outreach.missouri.edu/owm/hhw.htm

Mosquito Control - West Nile Virus

For current guidelines, check out the Department of Health webpage at www.stlouisco.com/doh/west_nile_info.html#wnv_apr