

Slugs – “Bait or Barriers?”

When it comes to slug control there is a deluge of snake oil solutions to protect your garden. Each one with an attractive cartoon slug meeting its demise on the package. What isn't on the outside of the box is the routine application of said chemical. Nor does it illustrate the surrounding effects on the environment. With such an abundance of slugs in our west coast landscapes it is difficult to resist the solutions these products offer. Is this a solution? Slugs contain both female and male parts so to eliminate your problem completely you would have to kill every slug within an acre. Sounds like a lot of work to me.

Copper barriers on the other hand have no impact on the environment other than the immediate vicinity of a slug attack. They target control to the plants most susceptible reducing your efforts by providing lifetime control. More importantly copper barriers were developed by Mother Nature herself.

Garden Projects

Gardeners do not live on bread alone and Neither do the variety of beneficial insects That feed on harmful pests. Along with the meat of pests many predators need a source of nectar and pollen to balance their diet. An environment that provides the combination of these requirements is a place that the good guys can thrive. Many plant species may already be included in your garden but here are a few to add this season.

Fennel	Dill
Angelica	Calendula
Lupin	Nicotiana
Foxglove	Catnip
Hollyhock	Cosmos
Yarrow	Sunflowers
Mullein	Alyssum



Garden Giggles

What do you call two young married spiders?

Newly webs.

Bug Me!

Q. *I have been working the soil in my garden and I am finding large brown caterpillar or grub like things. Gross!*

A. The cutworm is not a very attractive creature and neither is its appetite. What you have found in the soil is a juvenile moth or caterpillar. These caterpillars



receive their name from the saw like way the kill young seedlings or small plants
See [Good Bugs Bad Bugs](#)

Q. I hope that you can help. My grade 3/4 students have found two caterpillars that we would like to identify. The first was lime-green when it first came in, with little lines down both sides. It turned brown after two days, and still shows some markings. Today's specimen is uniformly dark brown, and more active than the first.



A. Very difficult to identify without photo but it sounds like you have a cabbage looper and a variety of cutworm. Any chance I could get a picture for exact id?

What's Going on in The Bug Lady's Garden?

The frogs are chirping like mad right now. Checking back in my garden journal says that this year's family is 10 days earlier than the last 2 years. The Caddis Fly are also very active, there are many in my pond with complete casings. How constructive they are. The Bumble queens are out preparing for brood and the aphids are all ready gnawing at the Hellebores. The ladybugs are quick on their tail as the first sighting of our favourite beetle occurred on the 8th of March. Ahh Ha! No rest for the wicked.

There is certainly food out there. The Cherries are bursting with bloom, as are the Crocuses and Primula. The Plum cherry is about to bud and the Wasabi is just steps ahead. The Lilacs are showing their purple buds to contrast the Tulips that are right on time. Even the Dandelions and Pussy Willows have been poking their heads for days.

Who needs a calendar or thermometer when the answers are all at your doorstep. Watching your garden is the best indicator for timing the garden activities. Pruning your trees, forecasting for pests or planting out can all be scheduled to corresponding indicators in the garden.

What's going on in your garden? Give us some feedback as to what is blooming in your neck of the woods.

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Look deep into nature and you will understand everything better.

Albert Einstein

Nematodes: Nature's Yard Care Solution!

A key component in understanding pest management on your home turf is that nature always provides an answer. We just need to ask what she would do to control an infestation in your yard. What are the natural enemies of lawn, soil and plant pests that have a portion of their lifecycle in the soil? These pests include European Chafer, Black Vine Weevil, Crane fly, Sod Web Worm, Carrot Rust Fly, Cabbage maggot, Cutworm and Fleas to name a few.

The ecosystem in your garden is not comprised of the multitudes of flora and fauna that would be found in an untouched forest. Your garden probably started out with sterile topsoil, compost, mulch, trees, shrubs, sod, and landscaped plants. A solid vegetative foundation is laid and life settles in. As time goes on, this ecosystem starts to come to life. Deer, squirrels, skunks, birds, frogs and insects start to "appreciate" all your efforts and your yard becomes their home too. Although some of these critters are not as welcomed as others, we understand they are all doing their thing. The problem arises when varieties of plants chosen become targeted by pest infestation. This mainly happens when a less tolerant variety of plant is grown or the occurrence of bad guys in your vicinity has escalated and dispersed to your yard. Pest dispersal is a seasonal happening that was devised to make sure the population would thrive for many more generations. Generations would happen unless there was a natural safeguard, a natural enemy providing a BUG BALANCE. Nature's way to balance soil pests is by way of the nematode.

Nematodes are soil dwelling microscopic wormlike creatures, which enters the pest through its breathing holes.

Once inside and feeding, a natural bacterium is released by the nematode that specifically kills its host within a few days. Soon, up to 10 000 new nematodes will emerge from this host building up the soils natural enemies providing protection to your yard for many generations to come.

Application is as simple as watering in a solution of nematodes. With your watering can, apply the solution directly onto the base of plants, within the drip-line or directly onto the soil and turf surfaces that are affected by pests. Once the nematode is applied to the surface they must be watered in. A few tricks for nematode application are to apply early in the morning or early evening when the temperatures are not too extreme and sun exposure is limited. Also ensuring adequate moisture is maintained within the soil, over the next few days, to provide the nematode with the ease of mobility to seek out its next host. Given that our summers are increasing becoming drier, apply nematodes early in the spring and later in the summer and fall. Taking preventative action early to protect your yard and garden investment means less devastation and less impact to your gardens most prized possessions.


Visit thebuglady.ca to find out what species of nematode is specialized to the pest problem you are facing. Keep in mind that all gardens can benefit from all the nematode species.

Good Riddance to Pesticides

Making the change to Earth friendly gardening practices requires a fresh start to pest control. However, getting rid of the poisonous pesticides requires responsible disposal. Synthetic compounds will harm our

watersheds and ground water as the properties that make pesticides work are the properties that kill. These properties include high water solubility, slow absorption (the ability of a pesticide to remain in the soil), and high persistence (how long it takes for the chemical to degrade).

Getting rid of the pesticide bottles left lingering in the back corner of the garage is as easy as driving to a Product Care "[Paint Plus](http://www.productcare.org)" Depot location available to all BC residents. Product Care is a non-government response to stewardship regulations demanded of "brand owners". There is no charge to drop off leftovers that are accepted by the program. To find the Depot close to you check out <http://www.productcare.org>. Consumer products accepted by Product Care must have both the poisonous (skull &

cross bones) symbol  and Pest Control Product (PCP) number. Maximum container size is 10 Litres.

Upcoming Events

March 5 2005 – 10-4pm
Comox Seedy Saturday
Filberg Center Courtenay
Vendor/Speaker

March 6 2005 10-3pm
Nanaimo Seedy Sunday
Vendor/Speaker

March 16 2005 6:30pm
Golden Acre Garden Centre
Medicine Hat AB

March 19 2005 10am
Art Knapp Plantland
Courtenay BC

April 2 2005 10 a.m.
Cannor Nursery
Victoria BC

If you have any questions about bugs or have a garden giggle
Just Bug me!

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