

GARDEN TIPS FROM THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Drowning slugs, sow bugs, and other pests is often the most effective way of controlling them. Milk is just as effective and much cheaper than beer, but curdles in hot weather. Mix the following instead: 3 tsp. sugar, 1 tsp. yeast, and 12-14 oz. of tepid water. Pour into containers (such as deep jar lids, tuna cans, yoghurt containers with the tops cut down) and set in the ground with or without rain covers.

Insecticidal soaps such as Safers help replace petrochemicals in the garden for the control of soft-bodied insects such as aphids, mites, soft scales, and stink bugs. The following mixture will work nicely, too: 2-4 Tbsps. dishwashing liquid (e.g. Ivory) to a gallon of water. Use in a household spray bottle as a contact insecticide. For use with tank or hose-end sprayers, wet foliage parts where insects are found with a medium to fine spray.

Yellow color attractants are a registered product for control of whitefly, fungus gnats, aphid nymphs, and many other pests. You can make the attractants yourself with yellow cards or painted boards. Cover with a sticky substance such as Tanglefoot or heavy motor oil (SAE 90) and place every few feet among the plants.

Recent studies have shown that many gardeners are over-maintaining their lawns with too much fertilizer, too much herbicide, and too much water. Tests by the Smithsonian Institution showed that a lawn given frequent feeding, watering, and pest treatments, and mowed 1/2" high was almost indistinguishable from one given far less care and mowed 2" high. Frequent light waterings (15 minutes or less) actually encourage weeds and diseases. Let's conserve! Depending upon your soil structure and climate, watering once every 4-7 days for 35-40 minutes should bring water to an ideal depth of 3-5 inches.