

Detering Slugs Naturally



Using Natural Enemies

The toad is the slug's worst enemy, although there are other things that eat slugs and snails. Ground beetles, slow-worms and frogs, even centipedes will eat them, as well as birds. Put in a wildlife pond if you can, or simply provide a container with water - as long as the toads have access, they will come, bringing frogs with them. It will also encourage birds to visit your garden more often. Thrushes especially like eating slugs.

Ground beetles share the same habitat as slugs; moist areas that are protected from the sun during the day. Provide stone slabs, pieces of wood, and other moist areas for them to shelter under. This will also encourage hedgehogs, which eat slugs.

To make it easy for birds to eat them, place citrus peel or melon rinds around the garden in the evening. The slugs will be attracted by any seeds remaining, and will stay under as daylight comes. Turn the peel or rind over in the morning to display the sheltering slugs to birds. Birds will also eat the eggs, so raking the garden can expose them. The majority hatch in spring, although eggs are laid all year round.

Packets of nematode worms can be bought to add to damp soil, where they remain active for around six weeks. Slugs have been seen to avoid earth treated with nematodes, so they are ideal for natural slug control. Add them to the area where you are growing your most vulnerable plants and they will be well-protected without the need to treat your entire garden.

Using Natural Barriers

Seaweed is a natural repellent to slugs, as it is salty. Pack it around 3-4 inches around the plants that you want to protect, making sure it doesn't touch them. The slugs will stay away, as the seaweed will dehydrate them. When it is dry, seaweed becomes very rough, so will still deter the slugs. Egg shells and gravel placed around the base of plants will provide a rough surface which the slugs will not wish to cross.

Please do not use

Slug Pellets - Never use slug pellets in your garden. The poison they contain almost always kills hedgehogs, who eat the pellets as well as the poisoned slugs (as do birds), even so called wildlife friendly slug pellets still contain toxins.

Coffee - this kills other very beneficial insects and can actually kill your plants

Salt - is bad for the soil and a horrible way to kill any creature.

Beer - Other insects and animals can fall in and drown, many of which are very beneficial to the garden, eg. Ground beetles.