

Humane Ways to Stop Garden Pests

Now that the fruits of your green thumb gardening appear, various critters are excited to taste your bountiful buffet. The challenge is to keep them out without resorting to harmful chemicals, electric shock, or traps.

1. **FENCING** - Experts agree that the most effective step to protect your garden from rabbits is by blocking access with proper fencing. That means a wire mesh fence that is 2- to 3-feet high (most rabbits cannot jump higher) and that is buried at least 6 inches deep to thwart diggers. If you are serious about gardening in the future, you might consider more expensive barriers: Raised Garden Bed Rabbit Fencing can cost nearly \$90 for a 4- by 8-foot by 21-inches-high size; Garden Zone Rabbit Netting that is made of reinforced 20-gauge galvanized wire with extra line wire protection on the bottom half. The 28-inch high, 25-foot long roll costs about \$20.
2. **PLANTS** - Consider putting **plants** to work by planting the perimeter of your garden with varieties that offer a strong odor and taste (even in the roots) that animals don't like. These include cayenne pepper plants, garlic plants, and chives.
3. **HAIR**: Don't throw away the hair that gathers in your hairbrush. Some gardeners have had success using human, dog, or cat hair spread around or on plants.
4. **CONSIDER A DOG OR CAT**: While our domesticated varieties aren't the predators they once were, small garden-eating animals don't know that but be warned that urban raccoons will win a cat or dog fight any day of the week. There is also a risk of your pet contacting various diseases.
5. **ELIMINATE OTHER NON-GARDEN FOOD ENTICEMENTS**. This includes garbage, standing water, and even dirty barbecues. Raccoons, skunks, opossum are opportunistic feeders; if they don't find food in your garden, they will look elsewhere. These crafty critters are very adept at using their hands and feet.
6. **OTHER NATURAL REPELLENTS** - For all varmints who approach above ground or by tunneling, consider natural repellents placed on or around your plants and garden beds to discourage feeding. Some of the most popular are hot pepper spray, Hot Red Pepper Flakes or powder that the animals don't like; granulated urine from fox and other carnivore animals that are natural predators to garden munching animals (some people also swear by sprinkling kitty litter around the perimeter of a garden); and blood meal, a great source of nitrogen for plants.

Read more:

<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/six-kind-ways-to-outsmart-varmints.html#ixzz38li6r0SP>

BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE!

Beneficial insects are insects which you can attract to your garden, or buy from catalogues, which prey on harmful insects or their larvae. They include: Braconids, Chalcids and Ichneumon Wasps, Ladybugs, Lacewings, Hover-flies, Praying Mantis.

Homemade remedies are inexpensive and, best of all, you know what is going into your garden. Many homemade sprays have been used with good results to control harmful insects. They usually involve noxious (but non-toxic) ingredients such as garlic, cayenne, stinging nettles or horsetail which are diluted in water and blended to be sprayed on the plants.

Read more including natural deer, rodent and mole control as well as specific recipes at http://eartheasy.com/grow_nat_pest_cntrl.htm

Other resources:

<http://lifehacker.com/5583176/draft-keep-your-yard-and-garden-pest-free-without-harsh-chemicals>

<http://www.sustainablebabysteps.com/organic-gardening-pest-control.html>

<http://www.no-dig-vegetablegarden.com/organic-garden-pest-control.html>

http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition_articles.asp?id=1324

<http://www.hgtvgardens.com/garden-basics/aphids-slugs-and-snails-oh-my-keep-bugs-out-of-the-garden-naturally>