

# Insecticides



**Pest Free:** No garden is pest free. A well-tended garden contains a balance of beneficial predators and healthy plants. Only use insecticides if there is damage that cannot be controlled any other way. Always start with the least toxic substance possible and gradually move to stronger measures as you need them.

**Ingredients:** Insecticides are made from a range of organic and synthetic sources and are available in liquid or dry form. Organic types are made from bacteria, viruses, fungi, fatty acids, minerals, oils and plants which quickly decompose into a nontoxic substance which will not harm the environment.

**How they Work:** Insecticides are generally sprayed or dusted on plants or soil. They suffocate, paralyse or poison the targeted pest. Be sure to completely cover the affected plant or soil.

**Horticulture oils:** Dormant and summer oils and are used to smother insect eggs and larvae. Use heavier dormant oils in late winter or early spring when the temperatures have risen above 4°C and deciduous plants haven't put out their leaves yet. Lighter summer oils can be used any time the temperature is below 29°C.

**Insecticidal soap:** This is one of the best defences against soft-bodied pests like aphids, mites and leaf miners. It is safe on most plants and is nontoxic to beneficial animals and insects.

**Know your enemy:** Make sure you positively identify the pest so that you can choose the appropriate insecticide. Study its life cycles and habits so that you can fight it effectively.

## Home Brews

**Insecticidal soap:** Mix 10mL (2 tsp) of dishwashing liquid with a few drops of vegetable oil and 3.8 L of water. Use a clean plastic spray bottle to apply.



**“Bug Juice”:** Collect a ½ cup of the insect you want to eradicate. Mash them with 2 cups of water and a few drops of liquid dish soap. Strain and spray on plants affected with that pest.

**Hot Stuff!** Blend a ½ cup of hot chili peppers with 2 cups of water and a few drops of vegetable oil. Strain and spray on plants.

**Test First:** Some insecticides scorch, discolour, or damage foliage. Always test the insecticide first on an inconspicuous part of the plant. If the plant remains healthy a few days after the initial application, spray the insecticide on the rest of the plant.

**Sprayers and Hoses:** Reserve a sprayer or hose end for insecticides only. Do not use the same one for other pesticides such as herbicides or fungicides. Label equipment clearly and clean thoroughly between each use.

**Bee kind to bees:** Many insecticides harm bees and other desirable insects. Try to use the most specific product possible - one that targets the pest you are trying to destroy.



## Insecticide Safety

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> Always read the label carefully and follow all the directions provided for use and storage.

> Apply on a dry, calm day with moderate temperatures

> Cover as much of your skin as possible. Do not touch your face.

> Do not allow insecticides to contaminate ponds or swimming pools.

> Do not apply to food crops unless it is specified that it is safe to do so.

**READ AND FOLLOW EXACTLY THE INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED.**