

Organic Pest Controls

07/20/2002

There are a number of organic techniques I use to reduce the amount of pests in and around my home. Best of all, none of them will harm pets, children or the environment.

Surrounding your garden with upright rosemary not only repels insects, but it makes a nice hedge. Rosemary naturally repels insects and smells and looks great, too.

If you have ant problems, try sprinkling bay leaves in and around problem areas. Bay leaves can also be placed throughout your pantry and cabinets for added protection. In addition, peppermint, tansy and geraniums have been known to ward off ants.

If you have cats or dogs, try growing catnip in their runs. Even though it tends to be a little invasive, catnip repels ants and fleas. You can also try growing it in pots around your pets' feeding bowls.

If your four-legged friends have tick problems, try planting rue and lavender -- they have both been known to repel ticks.

Remember: Lavender needs well-drained soil, so mix a lot of sand into the hole you plant it in.

Another herb that grows almost all year in the ground and in pots is basil. Not only is it great for cooking, but basil will ward off flies and mosquitoes.

Tip: Grow basil in an area that receives afternoon shade.

Recipes

Flea and Tick Control

2 sprigs lavender
20 eucalyptus leaves
1 quart water

Boil mixture. Use as a spray repellent.

Roach Control

1 part boric acid
9 parts peanut butter or sugar

Mix boric acid and peanut butter; smear on small pieces of cardboard, then place around your house for the roaches to eat.

Note: Mixture should be placed out of the way of pets and children.

Snail and Slug Control

1 beer
2 pie plates

Pour beer in 1 pie plate; top with second pie plate. Place in an infested area and the pests will crawl in, but they won't be able to crawl out.

Organic Products for Purchase

There are plenty of organic products that will help you control pests. If you're so inclined, try food-grade diatomaceous earth. Simply sprinkle some around the perimeter of your home and/or inside your home. This product will not harm your pets or children and will help eliminate your crawling-insect problem.

An old standby that I revert to is citrus. Just boil citrus (oranges, lemons and/or grapefruit), strain and pour into a spray bottle. When cool, spray around your house to repel ants, fleas, ticks, roaches, crickets and more. Spray anywhere there is a problem, even directly on your pet!