

DIY Pest Control Sprays

Organic garden pest controls preferred by most gardeners these days and many commercial repellent sprays combine the repellent effects of neem oil, garlic, onion, and hot pepper with the insecticidal and surfactant properties of soap. They are easy to make at home and dispense from your own recycled spray bottles using Island water.

Bug -Away Spicy Spray

- 1 garlic bulb
- 1 small onion
- 1 teaspoon of powdered cayenne pepper
- 1 quart of water
- 1 tablespoon liquid dish soap (castile soap recommended)

In a blender, PUREE garlic and onion in small amount of water. ADD cayenne pepper and mix with remaining water. STEEP overnight then STRAIN through cheesecloth or ultra-fine fine sieve into a spray bottle. ADD liquid dish soap. SHAKE well. LABEL bottle. Spray your infested plants thoroughly, including the undersides of the leaves. Refrigerate remains 1 week.

Neem Oil Spray: Neem oil, pressed from the seeds and fruit of the Neem tree, is an environmentally friendly, highly effective pesticide and repellent that once sprayed, will keep the plant eating insects at bay. It works internally within the bug's biological system by causing it to stop feeding and lose fertility, until it dies eventually. The pest needs to be exposed to neem oil by ingesting a portion of the plant that has been sprayed with a neem solution. This is why it is not harmful to bees, earthworms and other beneficial insects that do not feed on plants.

Store-bought preparations often use synthesized neem compounds or heat / benzene extraction which are not as effective. Also, when mixed with other ingredients, breakdown happens quickly, so commercial products may have lost its potency. **Cheaper and better to make your own, as needed.**

- 1-quart unchlorinated water, warm
- 1 tsp liquid dish soap (castile soap recommended)
- 1 tsp cold-pressed neem oil

Mix in a spray bottle and then shake, shake, shake well until oil and water no longer separate. Use this solution to spray generously on plant leaves, stem and roots area at dawn or early evening. If the infestation is heavy, repeat application after 2- 3 days. Once the pests are controlled, a regular weekly application is recommended as a preventive measure.

Neem oil quickly breaks down in sunlight over 5-7 days, and therefore should be applied regularly to be effective. Insects do not become immune to neem spray like other insecticides, so each application makes it just as effective as the last.

Controls insects at all stages of its development - from egg, larvae to adulthood - such as aphides, gypsy moths, Leaf miners, loopers, mealy bugs, thrips, whiteflies, Colorado potato beetles, flea beetles, corn earworms, cucumber beetles, Mexican bean beetles, Caterpillars and some types of fungus.

Precautions:

Sprays that contain soap or neem kill soft-bodied insects on contact or if ingested. Best to apply very early in the morning or in the evening when pollinators and beneficial insects are not active. Like any foliar spray, these ingredients can cause skin and eye irritation. When preparing and applying, wear gloves and keep the mixture well away from your eyes and nose. Do not apply in full sun to avoid burning plant tissue. Do not use on tender seedlings.