

Nurture Life, Protect Naturally

Pest Management Checklist — a printable companion to Guide 5 of 6

When You First See a Problem

- ☐ Look closely at the damage — holes, sticky residue, wilting, and discoloration all point to different causes.
- ☐ Check the undersides of leaves, where most pests feed and lay eggs.
- ☐ Check again at night with a flashlight, since slugs, earwigs, and cutworms are nocturnal.
- ☐ Identify what you found before treating anything — a photo, an ID app, or your local extension office can confirm it.
- ☐ Wait 7 to 14 days before intervening with anything beyond hand-picking.

Before Any Spray — Try These

- ☐ Hand-pick larger pests into soapy water, and remove any egg clusters you find.
- ☐ Blast small, soft-bodied pests off with a strong jet of water, repeated every 2 to 3 days.
- ☐ Use row covers to exclude flying pests from vulnerable crops.
- ☐ Set out sticky cards or beer traps where you're seeing whiteflies or slugs.

Spray Decision Guide

- ☐ Aphids, mites, whiteflies: insecticidal soap or a strong water spray, evening only.
- ☐ Caterpillars and cabbage worms: Bt kurstaki, applied while they're still young.
- ☐ Fungal disease plus insect pressure: neem oil, applied in the evening and never during bloom.
- ☐ Never spray open flowers, during midday, or before rain, and look for the OMRI Listed seal on anything you buy.

Prevent It Before It Starts

- ☐ Space plants properly and prune for airflow, so foliage dries fast and pests have fewer places to hide.
- ☐ Water at the soil line in the morning, and avoid working around wet foliage, since that's how fungal disease spreads by hand.
- ☐ Rotate crops on a three-year cycle where you can, so soil-borne pests and diseases don't build up in one spot.
- ☐ Choose disease-resistant varieties when they're available, and always inspect new transplants before bringing them home.
- ☐ Build healthy soil. Stressed plants attract pests; vigorous plants resist them.
- ☐ Plant flowers throughout the garden to keep beneficial predators around year-round.

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- ☐ Leave a little wild habitat, like a brush pile, hollow stems, or a patch of bare soil, for beneficials to overwinter.

Walk Your Garden & Close Out the Season

- ☐ Walk the garden two or three times a week, checking leaf undersides and new growth for anything out of place.
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- ☐ Clear away dead leaves, fallen fruit, and plant debris at the end of the season, since all of it can shelter pests and disease over winter.
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- ☐ Keep diseased plant material out of the compost pile unless it reliably reaches 148 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, and bury or discard it instead.
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- ☐ Clean your tools with a 10 percent bleach solution between plants and at the end of the season to avoid spreading disease.
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- ☐ Keep firewood, lumber, and other stored materials away from the house and garden beds, since they can attract pests.

Condensed from RootDelight's Let's Get Growing: Natural Pest Management course and Cultivating Success: Universal Principles for a Thriving Garden. Read the full guide and check your progress online at rootdelight.com/rd_courses/pest_management.html.