

ORGANIC YARD PRODUCTS



YARD SMART 2012 – Fact Sheet #4 *from the* ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER

Here are some effective products to help you take care of your yard without using chemicals:

Soil Enhancers

- **Compost tea / liquid soil conditioner** - Has many of the benefits of compost in an easy to apply liquid.
- **Earthworm castings** - Provide high quality, organic nutrients in slow release form, and some beneficial microbes.
- **Kelp extract** - Provides micro-nutrients and plant growth hormones, relieves environmental stress on turf.
- **Microbial inoculants** - Replaces beneficial microbes in the soil that lawn chemicals have depleted.
- **Organic compost** - Adds organic matter and beneficial micro-organisms to the soil, feeding plants and restoring a healthy soil environment.
- **Organic fertilizer** - Slowly enriches and feeds the soil. Fast acting synthetic fertilizers harm soil life.
- **Organica lawn products** [Lawn Booster, Kelp Booster, Dethatcher, Soil Conditioner] – Organica brand has packaged a complete set of organic lawn care products into an easy-to-use, four step system.
- **Rock dust minerals** - Provide important mineral micro-nutrients to turf grass and other plants.

Physical / Mechanical Controls

- **Coconut oil slug barrier** [such as Concern Slug Barrier] - Applied around garden beds to protect plants.
- **Copper slug barriers** - Flexible copper strips, which slugs will not cross, that can be placed around plant beds.
- **Netting** - Keeps bird pests off plants.
- **Sticky barriers** - Applied around tree trunks to prevent gypsy moth caterpillars and other crawling pests.
- **Traps** - A multitude of pests including gypsy moths, Japanese beetles, hornets and wasps can be lured and trapped. Traps are used to monitor and in some cases limit pest populations.

Composting Aids / Activators

- **Microbial compost inoculant** [compost activator] - microbes which accelerate the composting process.

Biological Controls

- **Beneficial nematodes** - Microscopic unsegmented worms that are harmless to plants but prey on pest insects.
- **Bt** - Bacteria that attack the digestive systems of certain types of pest insects, but are harmless to mammals and beneficial insects. Different strains are available to combat caterpillars and mosquito larvae.
- **Earth worms** - Called the gardener's best ally and "nature's plow," earthworms aerate and soften soil. They help to break down thatch. Their waste, or castings, provides nutrients that would be otherwise unavailable to plants.
- **Milky spore** - A bacteria which is virulent to Japanese beetle grubs and several other grubs, but is harmless to other organisms. It may take a season or two before you see a noticeable impact.
- **Beneficial insects** [ladybugs, praying mantises, lacewings] - prey on pests like aphids, scales, mealybugs, white flies, & mites.

Source: Neighborhood Network Research Center • 516/541-4321 • www.neighborhood-network.org

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Alternative Pest Control Treatments

- **Citrus insect killer** [Limonene] - An extract of citrus peels which is effective against a number of insect pests, with very low toxicity to mammals.
- **Corn gluten** - A corn protein applied to lawns in early spring to inhibit weed germination. It also provides nitrogen.
- **Diatomaceous earth** - Microscopic fossilized shells of algae with sharp edges that pierce insect bodies, dehydrating them. Apply to lawns, pet pathways & dog runs to control fleas and ticks; use around flower beds to discourage slugs & snails.
- **Dried blood** - Provides nitrogen for plants and also repels deer.
- **Garlic oil insect repellent** [such as Garlic Barrier] - Repels a wide variety of pests from your lawn and garden, including mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks.
- **Herbicidal soaps** [potassium salts] - Kills weeds and fungus by dehydration.
- **Horticultural oil/dormant oil** [vegetable-based such as canola oil] - Suffocates pests instead of poisoning them.
- **Hot pepper repellent** - Repels insects from vegetables, shrubs and flowers.
- **Insecticidal soap** [potassium salts] - Solutions of fatty acids and potassium salts that disrupt cell membranes of sucking insects and soft bodied mites.
- **Lemon & vinegar herbicide** [such as Nature's Glory] - An effective weed killer using lemon and vinegar as the active ingredients is now on the market.
- **Neem oil** - An extract of the tropical neem tree, which kills many pest insects, and has very low toxicity to mammals.
- **Predator urines** - Repels deer, rabbits, and other mammal pests.
- **Sulfur fungicide** - An elemental substance that disrupts the metabolic processes of fungi; sulfur can also control mites.

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