

Natural Pest Control



Image by: Chris Mills

Chemical pesticides can be devastating for wildlife, killing harmless species as well as the 'pest', and can build up in the food chain. Reduced use of chemicals means more natural food for wildlife, less residues on food plants and fewer toxins to be cleaned out of the water supply.

Natural Predators

- Encourage natural predators (see table below).
- Create habitats such as log piles, ponds and long grass to keep predators happy.
- Alternatively, human-made homes such as bird and bat boxes, bug boxes and hedgehog boxes will also attract welcome visitors.

Fact

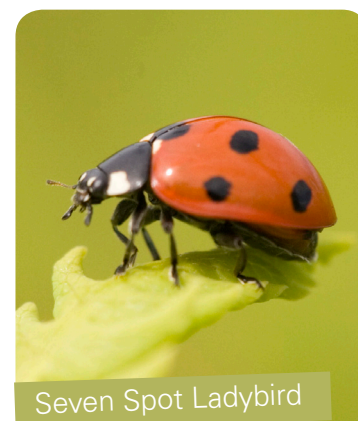
- One hedgehog can eat up to 500 slugs in one night!

Natural Pest Control And Their Prey

| AGENT | AGAINST | HOW TO ATTRACT AGENT |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Hedgehogs | Slugs | Leaf piles, hedgehog boxes |
| Birds | Caterpillars Snails | Plant seed/berry bearing plants, bird feeders, bird boxes |
| Frogs | Slugs | Pond, log piles |
| Ground and Rove beetles | Slugs Root fly eggs and larvae | Log piles, long grass |
| Centipede | Slugs Snails | Log piles |
| Hoverflies | Greenfly | Nectar rich flowers |
| Lacewings | Greenfly, scale insects, caterpillars, mites | Bug box |
| Ladybirds | Greenfly | Long grass, bug box |
| Plastic wasps | Caterpillars, aphids, scale insects | Bug box |

Other Considerations

- Give plants a chance to establish by avoiding planting too early in cold, heavy soil. Sowing indoors in pots and planting out when big enough to survive is a good idea.
- Try to prevent the pests reaching the plants in the first place. Many pests on vegetable crops can be excluded by crop protection nets, available from garden centres. A cheaper alternative is plastic drinks bottles with the bottom cut away placed over young plants. Sharp gravel or broken eggshells around the base of plants will deter slugs and snails.
- Healthy soil means healthy plants, with more resistance to pests or diseases. The best way to create healthy soil is to add your own compost.
- Remember plants native to your area will cope better with pest attacks.



Seven Spot Ladybird



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