

## Slugs\_Killer\_Ideas\_2004.txt

From: "Dee

Date: Sun Feb 9, 2003 8:51 am

from eartheasy.com

Slugs are in every garden, and cause more damage than most garden invaders. Commercial slug killers are available, but they are toxic to birds and other wildlife, and are less effective after rain, when slugs are most active.

Here are a few alternative natural, non-toxic methods of slug control:

### Watering Schedule

Far and away the best course of action against slugs in your garden is a simple adjustment in the watering schedule. Slugs are most active at night and are most efficient in damp conditions. Avoid watering your garden in the evening if you have a slug problem. Water in the morning - the surface soil will be dry by evening. Studies show this can reduce slug damage by 80%.

### Beer

Slugs are attracted to beer. Set a small amount of beer in a shallow wide jar buried in the soil up to its neck. Slugs will crawl in and drown. Take the jar lid and prop it up with a small stick so rain won't dilute the beer. Leave enough space for the slug to enter the trap.

### Seaweed

If you have access to seaweed, it's well worth the effort to gather. Seaweed is not only a good soil amendment for the garden, it's a natural repellent for slugs. Mulch with seaweed around the base of plants or perimeter of bed. Pile it on 3" to 4" thick - when it dries

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it will shrink to just an inch or so deep. Seaweed is salty and slugs avoid salt. Push the seaweed away from plant stems so it's not in direct contact. During hot weather, seaweed will dry and become very rough which also deters the slugs.

#### Copper

Small strips of copper can be placed around flower pots or raised beds as obstructions for slugs to crawl over. Bend the strips so one edge sticks straight up, making more of a "fence" for the slugs to climb. When crossing the copper, the slugs get a small electrical jolt which repels them.

Over time the copper loses some of its strength. This can be restored by going over the copper with a piece of fine sandpaper.

#### Diatomaceous Earth

Diatomaceous earth is the sharp, jagged skeletal remains of microscopic creatures. It lacerates soft-bodied pests, causing them to dehydrate. A powdery granular material, it can be sprinkled around garden beds or individual plants, and can be mixed with water to make a foliar spray.

Diatomaceous earth is less effective when wet, so use during dry weather. Wear protective gear when applying, as it can irritate eyes and lungs. Be sure to buy natural or agricultural grade diatomaceous earth, not pool grade which has smoother edges and is far less effective. Available in garden centers; it is fairly expensive.

#### Salt

If all else fails, go out at night with the salt shaker and a flashlight. Look at the plants which have been getting the most damage and inspect the leaves, including the undersides. Sprinkle a bit of salt on the slug and it will kill it quickly. Not particularly pleasant, but use as a last resort.

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### Overturned Flowerpots, Grapefruit Halves, Board on Ground

Overturned flowerpots, with a stone placed under the rim to tilt it up a bit, will attract slugs. Leave overnight, and you'll find the slugs inside in the morning. Grapefruit halves work the same way, with the added advantage of the scent of the fruit as bait. Another trap method, perhaps the simplest of all, is to set a wide board on the ground by the affected area. Slugs will hide under the board by day. Simply flip the board over during the day to reveal the culprits. Black plastic sheeting also works the same way.

### New caffeine-based slug/snail poisons

A recent study (June 2002) reported in the journal Nature found that slugs and snails are killed when sprayed with a caffeine solution, and that spraying plants with this solution prevents slugs from eating them. The percentage of caffeine required in a spray is greater than what is found in a cup of coffee, so homemade sprays are not effective. Look for new commercial sprays which are caffeine-based. (Although two caffeine-containing pesticides have been developed, neither is on the market yet. These products should be on the market soon.)

(this last one must be real new....but I have heard if you sprinkle coffee grounds around plants, the slugs won't bother the plant)

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From: (rachel)

Date: Sun Feb 9, 2003 8:55 am

I love this one - the seaweed. Hey, I can make the drive to NJ and collect seaweed there. I wonder, though, if it would be okay to just harvest it from what washes up on the beach. Do you think it might be polluted?

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From: "Dee"  
Date: Sun Feb 9, 2003 8:59 am

I don't know Rach, as polluted as our earth is, I guess it would still be worth a try to someone over attacked by slugs tho. Gardeners near the coast may know the best answer here...

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From: (Wendy)  
Date: Sun Feb 9, 2003 11:12 am

Leaving beer bottles laying on their sides always worked for me. Guess they like the dark AND the hops :-)

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From: Mike  
Date: Sun Feb 9, 2003 10:31 am

Once I get my brine tanks set up, I may be calling on you, Rach. What kind of seaweed washes up on them shores over yonder? The leafy green kind? The stringy red kind?

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From: GardenLivin  
Date: Sun Feb 9, 2003 10:42 am

Welll, it's been years since I lived at the shore, but memory tells me the leafy green kind - the kind with the bubbles you can pop, if you know what I mean.

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From: GardenLivin  
Date: Sun Feb 9, 2003 9:00 am

Don't some people use coffee grounds in their soil anyway? So they could serve a double purpose - ammending the soil in some way and deterring slugs?

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From: "cynthia"  
Date: Sun Feb 9, 2003 10:55 am

Don't go crazy with coffee and tea grounds, by the way. Caffeine is phytotoxic to many plants

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From: (Wendy)  
Date: Sun Feb 9, 2003 11:14 am

I always sprinkle my coffee grounds into compost or under my Andromeda. Andromeda's are acid loving plants. Sometimes I toss my tea bags under it, too :-)

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From: (Dona Aria)  
Date: Sun Feb 9, 2003 9:09 am

I tend to have a slug problem and what I have done is cut off about half of a plastic cup and place them around my plants with beer in them. Slugs like beer and after they have had their cocktail they just kind of take a nap and then I remove them.

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