



UC
MASTER
GARDENERS
NAPA COUNTY

Healthy Garden Tips

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University of California Cooperative Extension – Napa County

TEN WAYS TO REDUCE TOXIC PESTICIDE USE IN YOUR GARDEN

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1. **Use RESISTANT PLANTS:**
Eliminate plants less resistant to insects and diseases.
2. **Grow HEALTHY PLANTS:**
Put plants in proper location with adequate soil drainage, water and fertilizer balance.
3. **ENCOURAGE BIOLOGICALS:** A variety of plants favor natural predators and parasites.
Try to have plants in bloom every month.
Provide water and shelter for birds.
4. **PRACTICE SANITATION:** Regularly remove diseased and infested plant parts.
Completely remove diseased plants from the garden; crush all insects.
Maintain an active compost pile.
Include soil solarization as a regular summer practice.
Practice crop rotation to avoid build-up of soil problems.
5. **USE MULCHES AND BARRIERS** to moderate the garden environment.
Examples: crop row covers, mulches, screens, sticky bands, copper bands
6. **PRACTICE TOLERANCE:** Be alert! Inspect plants regularly for abnormal growth.
A few insect pests are needed as food for natural predators and parasites.
Diseased spots on old leaves may fall naturally without harm to plant.
Be aware of garden dynamics.
Does your plant problem need management?
7. **KEEP A GARDEN DIARY:** Track weather and key garden events.
Watch for the same problems year after year.
Be ready for the problem: “An ounce of prevention....”
8. **TIMELY CONTROL OF PROBLEMS**
Overwhelmed plants may need your help.
Get a correct identification of the problem. Seek professional advice.
Trim the affected part (or remove whole plant if severe) when you discover it.
Only practice control on plants that have the problem.
Time pesticide applications to pest activity, not calendar date.

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9. **CHOOSE LESS TOXIC PESTICIDES**
Use only pesticides made for that home garden problem.
Problem will be listed on pesticide label.
Choose low toxicity pesticides (look for 'CAUTION' on label) such as oils, insecticidal soaps and botanicals.
Purchase only what you need for that job. Respect label precautions.
Remember: even 'organic' pesticides are toxic.

10. **USE PESTICIDES SAFETY: follow product label instructions – exactly!**
Store all pesticides under lock and key – safe from children.
Wear protective clothing. Disposable coveralls are for single use.
Keep children and pets away.
Mix and use only what is needed for that day. Use up all that is mixed.
Clean all equipment before you store it.

Additional Reading:

Pests of Landscape Trees and Shrubs, UC ANR Publication #3359, pp. 3-43, 1994.

Pests of the Garden and Small Farm, UC ANR Publication #3332, pp. 3-34, 1998.

Natural Enemies Handbook, Illustrated Guide to Biological Pest Control, UC ANR Publication #3386, pp 3-12, 1998.

Citizen's Guide to Pest Control and Pesticide Safety, United States Environmental Protection Agency, EPA 730-K-95-001, pp 3-25, 1995.

Soil Solarization: A Nonpesticidal Method for Controlling Diseases, Nematodes and Weeds, UC ANR Publication #21377, 1997.

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