

SLUGS

Slugs are among the most pesky garden visitors. Fat and slimy, with an orange-ish brown body, they feed only at night and hide in moist, dark places during the day. Slugs will chew large, ragged holes in fruit, and the leaves and stems of any plant. (They are not picky eaters!) Often times, they will leave a trail of shiny, silvery slime on leaves and in the soil.

There are a couple of different methods to manage slug invasions in your garden. The first safe and inexpensive method that Growing Places recommends is homemade beer traps. To construct your own:

1. Cut a 2-inch hole about two-thirds up the side of a lidded plastic container, e.g., and empty margarine tub or small yogurt container.
2. Bury the container so the hole is just above the ground.
3. Add 2-3 inches of beer (or a mixture of 1 tablespoon each yeast, flour, and sugar, and 1 cup water).
4. Cover the container with its lid to seal the trap.

You can also deter slugs by spreading diatomaceous earth, an organic substance made from fossilized algae, on the soil around your plants; this will cut the underside of the slugs, causing them to dry out and eventually die.



Clockwise from top: Adult slug; slugs feeding on rotting cantaloupe; slug eggs

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Garden Insects of North America: The Ultimate Guide to Backyard Bugs | Whitney Crenshaw

The Organic Gardener's Handbook of Natural Pest and Disease Control | Jeff Ball