

# Healthy Home and Garden Tips

## Slugs in the garden

Life is returning to my garden and so are the slugs. The silvery slime trails crisscrossing the mulch in my garden are the telltale sign of their presence. These leaf-munching mollusks are a gardener’s worst nightmare. While slugs like to hide in damp dark places during the day, they come out at night to feed. Garden slugs will eat just about anything but prefer to dine on tender-leaved plants and seedlings. They are particularly damaging to vegetable and berry crops because they eat both the leaves and fruit.

Slug control is important if I want to protect my garden bounty from these pesky critters. I always stay away from toxic slug baits that may contain ingredients harmful to my pets and wildlife. Instead, I use one of the natural methods for safe, affordable and effective slug control in my garden.



Pacific Northwest Slugs	
Not all slugs are harmful. Use the chart below to determine if the slug is friend or foe.	
Friend	
	An Oregon native, banana slugs ( <i>Ariolimax columbianus</i> ) remain mostly out in the forest.
Foe	
	Native to Asia Minor and Europe, the spotted leopard slug ( <i>Limax maximus</i> ) is a common garden visitor.
	The European red slug ( <i>Arion rufus</i> ) is a frequent guest in gardens across the West Coast.

### Natural slug control

**Remove hiding places.** Cut back grass and weeds. Remove bricks, boards or pots slugs can hide under.

**Handpick slugs and snails.** Use tweezers to pick slugs at night or during the day when cool or wet. Drop them into a jar of soapy water, or snip them in two, then bury or compost them.

**Use simple traps.** Beer or yeast traps can help, but must be covered to keep out rain and refilled every few days.

**Destroy egg masses.** Look for and destroy pearly clusters of eggs under garden debris.

**Use barriers.** Install copper tape or copper foil around pots and planting boxes. Remove slugs already inside the barrier.

**Encourage natural predators.** Encourage snakes, birds, lizards, toads and frogs to make a home in your garden.

## Spring cleaning

After being cooped up inside all winter, I look forward to emerging from my cold weather stupor to begin my annual spring cleaning ritual. With renewed vigor, I am ready to tackle the clutter that has accumulated in my home and garage over the past few months. This year I'm paying special attention to the cleaning and gardening products taking up space in cabinets and on shelves. Wanting to reduce the amount of harmful chemicals being released into the environment, I have decided to eliminate many popular household brands from my cleaning and gardening arsenal. Fortunately, disposing of these products is easy if you follow these simple tips.

### Tips for disposing of harmful chemicals

- Leave all waste in its original container whenever possible.
- Make sure caps and lids are tightly secured.
- Label all containers with the name of the product using a permanent marker. If you do not know the contents, write "UNKNOWN" on the container.
- Never combine different chemicals into a single container.
- Bring containers to your local disposal facility in a sturdy, rigid container (e.g. box or bin) that staff can easily remove from the vehicle. Do not bring it in bags.
- Keep small items like compact fluorescent bulbs and miscellaneous batteries in separate containers during transport to prevent leakage and breakage.



### All natural bleach substitute

Try this recipe for safer alternative to the toxic chemicals found in bleach. Smells great and can also be safely used with septic systems.

#### Materials:

- 1½ cups 3% hydrogen peroxide
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ¾ cups water
- 5 drops lemon essential oil (optional)
- Quart-sized spray bottle

#### Directions:

Mix hydrogen peroxide, lemon juice, lemon essential oil (optional) and water in a spray bottle.

#### Learn more:

[oregonmetro.gov/garden](https://oregonmetro.gov/garden)

[oregonmetro.gov/healthyhome](https://oregonmetro.gov/healthyhome)

[oregonmetro.gov/askmetro](https://oregonmetro.gov/askmetro)

[youtube.com/user/OregonMetroGov](https://youtube.com/user/OregonMetroGov)

## Ask Metro

Recycling Information Center  
at 503-234-3000,  
Monday to Friday from  
8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Follow us on Instagram  
[@recycleornot](https://www.instagram.com/recycleornot)