

Pledge 9

Stop using weed killers and slug pellets

Pesticides, herbicides and fungicides come at a price. Many pollinators, including honeybees, are now endangered because of the use of a group of chemicals called neonicotinoids.

All gardeners can make a difference to the health of the planet.

Weed control

Good old elbow grease is the best weed control. Before perennial weeds get established, remove the roots with a hand fork, this is great exercise and very effective! Annual weeds can be easily hoed off on a hot, dry day by running a sharp hoe blade just below the soil surface to decapitate the seedlings.

If you prefer to simply spray your weeds, choose products that work but are also kind to the environment. Weedkillers based on pelargonic acid (derived from pelargoniums) are one option.

Remember to be sure that you are not buying chemically-treated plants, you can shop only from organic nurseries or from those that can guarantee the provenance of their stock. Or grow your own plants from seeds and cuttings raised from chemical-free plants.

Slugs and snails

Before you reach for the toxic metaldehyde pellets, please consider alternatives — that really do work.

- Harness the power of nature with naturally occurring nematodes that parasitise your slugs. You can buy nematodes to water onto your precious plants from garden centres or online.
- Arguably the best and at least the most exciting solution to slugs and snails in your garden, are hedgehogs, frogs and wild birds. So, make sure you complete Pledge 8 and you may get a free slug Hoover wandering into your garden soon!
- As a last resort, organic slug pellets are as effective as metaldehyde ones. But, unlike metaldehyde, which leaves a battlefield of slimy dead bodies, ferric phosphate casualties slope off to die or bury themselves in the soil.



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