

# Slugs



Ragged holes in your lettuce and hostas? Your problem is probably slugs. In addition to the holes you may also find slime trails. If you check your plants in the evening or early morning you'll find the culprits themselves.

Slugs can be removed by hand and disposed of, however when you consider that we see only about 10% of the slug population above ground, this is hardly the most effective method of controlling them.

Probably the most important thing you can do to reduce slug damage to your gardens is to clean up your garden! By removing bricks, boards, leaf litter and other debris you remove their hiding places.

Second, use an Iron phosphate based slug bait. This new generation of slug is much safer for humans and pets than previous baits. Scatter the pellets around the plants that you wish to protect. They lay eggs late in the summer so controlling them before they lay eggs is the best means of controlling them next year.

Alternately, you can attract the slugs with beer in a container that is sunk into the soil. The slugs are attracted to the smell of the yeast in beer, they will crawl into the container and die. You will need to check and clean your traps daily.

Finally, creating a barrier around your garden may discourage slugs from visiting your tender plants. Try top dressing with diatomaceous earth, wood chips, perlite or crushed eggshells.

While slugs are a garden pest, they are an important part of our ecosystem they play a role in the decomposition of decaying vegetable matter and provide nourishment for salamanders, garter snakes, foxes, beetles, millipedes, and many other creatures!