7 Organic Techniques for Insect Pest Control in Your Garden

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Understand the Landscape

- Identify your worst pests
- Use sticky traps to monitor
Build Healthy Soil

- Test your soil and balance soil nutrients
  - Healthy plants are resilient!
- Rotate crops
- Incorporate compost
- Encourage beneficial bacterial and fungal activity
- Plant cover crops and plan for rest periods

- Hypha mycelium network increases active root surface for nutrient acquisition up to 700 times
Scout Your Crops

- Be pro-active. Pests are hardest to combat after they’re already out of control.
- Plan for a daily or weekly field walk to carefully observe your crops.
Biological Controls

- Plant flowers for your friends! Cultivate habitat for beneficial insects and birds
- Reduce pest habitat: Weed, Break pest cycle by eliminating plant family from crop plan
- Buy beneficial insects
Physical Barriers

- Row Covers, fine mesh covers
- Surround
- Diatomaceous earth
Chemical Controls

In extreme cases, organic chemical controls are an option.

- **READ THE LABEL** - Gives important info about risks, rates of application, rate of dilution for sprays

- **Examples:**
  - Insecticidal soap: controls arthropods and soft-bodied insects, safe for honey bees
  - Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis): controls various caterpillars and moths, bacterium is safe for honey bees
  - Neem oil: can control aphids, spider mites, scale, whiteflies, beetles, NOT safe for honey bees when wet
Consider special measures for your worst pests:

- Avoid planting windows for plant families that might benefit your pest (or eliminate the crop!)
- Follow the degree days for your worst pests
- Use lures/repellents
Good luck out there!