



## Why avoid pesticides?

Most households use some chemical pesticides. Residue is often found at high levels inside from pesticides used indoors or tracked in from outdoors. Unfortunately, pesticide exposure can trigger illness and lead to long-term health problems such as cancer. Children are especially vulnerable to exposure because their bodies are still developing. There are safe alternatives to chemicals for pest control.



## Pest prevention shopping list

**Caulk:** Seal cracks if wider than a nickel's thickness ( $\frac{1}{16}$ th inch) along cabinets, baseboards windows and siding.

**Screen:** Install screens on doors, windows, vents to outdoors (from dryers, eaves & attic), and floor drains.

**Weatherstripping & door sweeps:** Close gaps around entryways.

**Glass jars:** Store grain, cereal and dry goods in sealed glass jars to prevent moths & other pantry pests.

## Pest control shopping list

**Traps:** Choose sticky traps that attract and eliminate pests without using chemicals.

**Bait & gel:** If you must use chemicals, spot applications and tamper-proof baits are safer than fogs & sprays.

### Less-toxic active ingredients:

- Bacillus thuringiensis
- Boric acid
- Diatomaceous earth
- Insecticidal soaps
- Castor oil
- Neem oil
- Citric acid
- Potassium bicarbonate
- Clove (and herb) oil

## What to avoid

- Foggers, bombs & aerosol:** Broad applications pose greater risk for accidental exposure.
- Metaldehyde snail bait:** Dogs are commonly victims of accidental poisoning.
- Pellet baits:** Easy accessibility and bright colors increase risk of accidental ingestion.
- Weed & Feed:** Avoid broad applications of herbicides in areas where your lawn may not need them.

## Lawn pest remedies

The best defense against weeds is a healthy lawn: Set your mower to cut at a height of 2 to 2 1/2 inches. Leave grass clippings on the lawn.

Avoid over watering. Water deeply and infrequently to build deeper roots and help prevent disease.

Use a long-handled weed puller to remove tenacious weeds at the root.

## Garden pest remedies

**Spray:** 2 tablespoons liquid soap to 1 quart water in a spray bottle will kill soft-bodied bugs like aphids and mites. Spray directly on pests.

**Mulch:** Spread mulch on top of garden soil to discourage weeds and prevent disease. Purchase bark mulch or use grass clippings and shredded leaves.

**Slug trap:** Prop up the corner of an overturned flower pot or half melon rind near the garden. Remove slugs attracted to the hiding spot.

## Pantry pest remedies

**Vacuum:** Moths & beetles can live a long time in cracks & crevices. Vacuum cupboards thoroughly after an infestation.

**Freeze:** To prevent pantry pests, store cereal, grain, and dry goods in the freezer for a few days after purchasing.

**Glass:** Pantry pests can get through cardboard & plastic. Store goods in sealed glass jars.

## Sugar ant remedies

Tiny *sugar ants* search indoors for sweet food. Pesticide sprays pose a risk and don't work well. Try this:

**Bait:** Mix Borax & sweet syrup. Spread on masking tape and place near ant trails. Pre-mixed boric acid baits are also sold in stores.

**Spray:** To kill ants and prevent them from following a trail, spray and wipe with vinegar or minty soap and wipe.

**Deter:** Mint, cinnamon or clove (oil or dried) placed in cracks near windows, doors & walls keep ants out.

## About mold & mildew

Mold & mildew can trigger asthma & allergies. Use fans or open windows in the bathroom, laundry room and kitchen to control moisture.

**Fans:** Ensure that bathroom and kitchen vents work. Turn on the fan and release a puff of baby powder to see if air moves effectively.

**Vinegar:** White vinegar kills mold & mildew. Use it as a daily shower spray and surface wipe.

## More resources

Download our guide to safer pest management:

[www.oeconline.org/livinggreen](http://www.oeconline.org/livinggreen)

What to ask before you hire a professional:

<http://oregonipm.wsu.edu/homeipm.html>

EPA pest control guidelines

[www.epa.gov/pesticides/controlling/dosanddents.htm](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/controlling/dosanddents.htm)