

## Strategies for Dealing with Slugs

### How to Reduce Slugs

- Attract natural predators like ground beetles, garter snakes and frogs by planting permanent walkways of clover, sod or mulch between the rows to provide refuge.
- Dispose of all residues where slugs can hide and lay eggs.
- Maintain a border of bare soil around the garden.
- Do not overwater the garden.
- Hand-pick slugs in the evening or early morning.
- Look for slugs on the plants or under vegetation near damaged plants.
- Place a floating row cover or fine screen to protect small plants and new shoots. Make sure no slugs are trapped under the cover
- A barrier of crushed eggshells or diatomaceous earth around plants damages the body of slugs, leading to dehydration and death. Replace the diatomaceous earth regularly.
- Keep generous spacing between plants in the garden to allow good air circulation and reduce hiding spots for the slugs.
- Avoid mulching the soil with grass clippings or any damp material that the slugs could use as a hiding spot.
- Lay boards, grapefruit or melon rinds, cabbage leaves or cut raw potatoes on the soil. These objects will give the slugs a hiding place, so the pests can then be gathered every few days and killed.
- Shallow containers of beer or any yeasty-smelling fermented product can be dug into the soil, so the container edge is even with the soil surface. These products will attract slugs, which will fall into the containers and drown.
- Copper stripping or flashing can be used as a barrier that slugs will not cross.
- Spade the garden in the fall either to bury the eggs or to bring them to the surface over the winter.
- Apply slug baits or pellets according to label directions. Do not allow the product to come into contact with plants. Protect baits from pets and wildlife.
- Putting the bait under boards will keep the bait dry, and the slugs will be drawn to the area naturally. Replenish the bait once it has dissolved.
- Start control early in the season, although warm nights are best for baiting

Source: [Pests of Vegetables – Alberta Government - pdf](#)

### Claudia's Methods

I make it a routine to pick slugs around 7 the morning, just for 15 minutes, and I usually learn their favourite spots (but my yard is quite small). Here is how I pick:

I pour about 1 litre of water in a plastic container, add approx. 1 Tbsp of salt and a few drops of dish soap. Then I gently stir the mixture. I put a latex glove on my dominant hand and go out. I gently coax each slug into my cupped hand, then quickly plop it into the salt-water mix. I flush the mix in the toilet.

I have been collecting and washing eggshells. I will crush and spread them around the most susceptible plants (beans, lettuce).

My perennial beds have a permanent cover of mulch and leaves, and there are certainly spots where the slugs hide, especially if there are cracks in the soil. I still prefer to have mulch to reduce the amount of weeding and watering I have to do, and to feed the soil. In the vegetable garden, I mulch with straw and leaves, but not until the plants are larger and it gets hot. And yes, I also find slugs there, sometimes hiding under straw in cooler parts of the garden. You might want to try mulching with compost instead of coarser materials, as it gives the slugs fewer hiding spots. The compost provides nutrients to the plants and hopefully helps to protect the soil and also gives microbes some food.

### **Tips from Linda Gilkeson, Master Gardener and Author**

Source: <https://newsociety.ca/blogs/news/managing-slugs-and-snails-in-the-garden?sitedomain=ca>

Water in the morning to allow the soil surface to dry by evening.

Use drip irrigation or soaker hoses to limit the surface area of moist soil. Pull mulches well away from seedling rows until plants are well-grown. Patrol the garden in the evening or early morning to kill slugs. Lay boards, slabs of damp newspaper, or grapefruit halves on the soil, and kill any slugs hiding underneath in the morning. Use strips of copper or zinc mesh around the edges of planters and on legs of greenhouse benches to repel slugs (this only works if you are sure there are no slugs or slug eggs already inside the area).

Slug baits containing iron are very effective (several brands are approved for use by certified organic growers). Unlike the old toxic slug baits containing metaldehyde, these won't harm pets or wildlife. Sprinkle the granules sparingly, but widely, over a whole garden bed, and replace after heavy rain. Don't use it to encircle plants you are protecting because it is an attractant for slugs and acts slowly, leaving the slugs plenty of time to eat your plants before feeling the effects.

Spreading sharp materials, such as wood ashes, sharp sand, or diatomaceous earth (may be listed as silicon dioxide on the label), around plants is of little or no use, especially in wet conditions. Diatomaceous earth would also kill beneficial insects that walk across it.

Slug Trap: Drown slugs by attracting them to containers of fermenting liquids (slugs love yeast). The bait container should have holes cut in the sides to allow slugs access, as well as a lid to prevent ground beetles (important predators of slugs, from falling in. Set the container into the soil with the holes just above the soil surface. Fill it three-quarters full of beer, or use a mixture of water, baking yeast, and sugar.

### **Veggies that are less susceptible to Slugs**

- arugula
- beets (sometimes prone)
- celery and celeriac
- chard
- chives

- cucumbers (young plants are endangered)
- endive, chicory, radicchio
- fennel
- garlic
- lamb's lettuce
- leeks
- melons (young plants are threatened)
- onions
- peas (sometimes young plants are vulnerable)
- potatoes (depending on the variety)
- spinach (some species and young plants can be susceptible)
- radish (depending on place and species, young plants can be susceptible)
- red-leafed lettuce (Lollo Rosso)
- rhubarb
- tomatoes