

# Plants - Typical First Strikes by Housekeeping & Maintenance

## Garden Insects

1. Get a 2-liter plastic bottle, string, 1 banana peel, 1 c. sugar, and 1 c. strong vinegar. Slice banana peel into strips and insert them into the plastic bottle. In a separate container, combine sugar and vinegar. Pour this mixture into the bottle, then fill it to within 2 inches of the neck with water. Tie the string around the neck of the bottle, then tie the other end around the lower branches of a tree. Fruit and black flies, yellow jackets, and other insects find the fermenting banana, sugar, and vinegar more attractive than the fruit on the tree. Once they fly in, they get caught in the sticky mixture and drown. This reportedly works so well that it can make spraying fruit trees with diluted Safe Solutions Enzyme Cleaner with Peppermint unnecessary.
2. Mix 1 c. dish washing detergent and 1 c. vegetable oil. Add 1 - 2 tsp. of this mixture with 1 c. water and spray it on plants.
3. Spray with diluted (1 - 2 oz. per gal. water) Safe Solutions Enzyme Cleaner with Peppermint as needed.
4. Take an empty spray bottle and fill about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way with water, then add a few drops Ivory® liquid soap, some hot peppers or hot pepper sauce and some garlic. This works well, but needs to be reapplied after every storm and/or every couple of weeks.
5. Grind together three hot peppers, three large onions, and at least one whole clove of garlic. Cover mash with water and place in a covered container. Let container stand overnight. Strain mixture through cheesecloth or a fine strainer and add enough water to make a gallon of spray.
6. Mix one tablespoon of a mild dish washing detergent plus one teaspoon of a vegetable cooking oil with one quart of water. This can be sprayed on all plants. Remember to spray both the top and the underside of the leaves. You can also add 1 tsp. (rounded) of baking soda if you have fungus problems or use diluted apple cider vinegar or a little lime. You could also lightly dust with Safe Solutions, Inc. food-grade DE.
7. White cabbage butterflies stamp on plant leaves with their feet in order to taste them. If they smell like mustard oil, females lay their eggs, so make some sticky traps with mustard oil.

## House Plant Pests

7. Spray with dishwater or 1 T. soap, 1 tsp. vegetable (canola) oil and 1 qt. water.
8. Make a spray of garlic, onion, cayenne pepper and dish soap.
9. Spray with 1 rounded tsp. baking soda and/or (1 oz. per 1 qt. water) Safe Solutions Enzyme Cleaner and/or 2 - 4 T. potato flour/starch if fungus develops. These mixes also kill insects.

## Safe Nematode Control

- Plant marigolds (*Tagetes spp*); (plant them first and disc into the soil and then plant susceptible plants) or mix in dried bean plant material or pressed milkweed seed cake to reduce or suppress nematodes.
- Solarization - Heat the soil under visquine.
- Flood with diluted Safe Solutions Enzyme Cleaner with Peppermint.

## Weeds - Typical First Strikes by Grounds People

1. Remember, "nature abhors a vacuum" and bare soil invites weeds to move in and fill the area. Avoid leaving any bare spots. Aerate the soil to loosen the dirt. Use lime to balance the soil acidity. Overseed. Shade is the best way to control weeds and fallen leaves are free, natural mulch and true "herbisafes." Adjust mower to 3" to remove all dandelion heads and collect all clippings that are diseased or infected. Use organic chicken manure that has been composted, e.g., Herbruck's Nature's Supreme 2-5-3, Nutri-Plus 10-3-4 and/or Pelleted Poultry Manure 4-3-2, [bgeerlings@herbrucks.com](mailto:bgeerlings@herbrucks.com)
2. Spray weeds in cracks and along fences with a steamer and vinegar plus a dash of soap, or use a regular sprayer and  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. borax per 1 gal. water and 1 dash liquid soap, or 5% citric acid, 1% peppermint oil, 1% vegetable oil, 1% salt and 1% soap in water; or mix 80% table vinegar and 20% rubbing alcohol and a dash of soap or diluted borax or salt water, or flame them with propane or use steam or boiling water. Vinegar has been registered by Sweden as a herbicide. The acetic acid in vinegar kills plants by

dissolving cell membranes, which causes desiccation of the plant's tissues. The stronger the acetic acid the better and quicker the control, but the stronger the more dangerous vinegar becomes to people and pets. Concentrations of vinegar or acetic acid over 5% can burn and should only be applied with protective equipment. **Remember, all controls work better on hot, sunny days! Be careful!**

3. Cover weeds with overlapping cardboard or newspaper (5 - 6 pages thick) or landscape fabric or black plastic (at least 4 mills thick) or tar paper, or tar paper shingles, or wood for several sunny days. Thickly mulch (at least 3") around newly planted trees and plants.
4. Start a good organic soil program. Remember, many weeds thrive in disturbed areas, so if you can minimize disturbance, you can minimize many weed problems.
5. Put down a fabric (weed control) ground cloth or black plastic with drainage holes in it and mulch or stone over it. Remember, simply pulling a few "weeds" is not a major chore.
6. If you still have weed problems, read the entire chapter.
7. If you need a good organic lawn care program or want to purchase Fasst or Safe Solutions exempted weed killer products, call Get Set, Inc. @ 1-616-677-1261 or Safe Solutions, Inc. @ 1-888-443-8738

**\*Safe Solutions products may be purchased online at:**

<http://www.safesolutionsinc.com>

**or by telephone at:**

**1-888-443-8738.**

