

Managing Pest Control Update (updated 21st July 2015)

If you see caterpillars wandering along your paths do not step on them, they may be the host to the eggs of predatory wasps. Predatory wasps are useful in the garden to biologically control some of the unwanted predators. Be economical when killing wasps, if they are not being a nuisance leave them alone as they are useful in the garden. It should be noted that even the predatory variety sting, that is how they deal with their prey.

At the Hampshire Federation of Horticultural Societies meeting on 28th February there was a comprehensive talk about managing pest control as very few pesticides are now available and many people are following organic gardening. Biological control is the way forward using natural predators. We learnt that, green lacewing larvae will eat soft bodied prey, you may wish to maintain a small patch of stinging nettles in your garden which as well as attracting butterflies act a host plant for aphids and their predators. Wasps are a very useful predator so we should not be anxious to eliminate them if they are not causing a nuisance.

A useful tip was that baking powder used at 5grams per litre of water will deal with powdery mildew as an alternative to a herbicide.

If you do go down the pesticide route to get the greatest benefit both physically and for your pocket pesticides must be used when the pests are metabolising. This requires a temperature of 8degrees Celsius, the eggs are not affected. Applications need to be carried out every 7-10 days to catch all the life stages. A thorough coverage is needed, above and below the leaf. Remember that the product will not work if you do not follow the directions on the label and saturated doses do not work any better but just waste your money.

The alternative to pesticides is nematodes, many of which are available to amateur gardeners over the internet.

I hope that this will be useful to the newer gardeners among us and the experienced gardeners are not offended by the reminders.

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