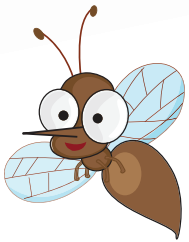




Natural, non-toxic outdoor pest control

Whether you've got swarming gnats, pesky mosquitos or industrious ants, gentle, safe solutions exist to keep the bugs at bay without putting your family or pets at risk. Here are just a few you can put to use this season:

Mosquitos



Eliminating standing water goes a long way to curbing these suckers. Also try:

- planting lemongrass, also known as citronella;
- adding potted marigolds to seating areas — mosquitos hate their scent;
- combining one part cinnamon, castor oil or eucalyptus oil with ten parts alcohol for a homemade repellent spray; and
- applying concentrated garlic extract mixed with water and a binder like olive oil as a yard spray every two weeks.

Gnats



Gnats breed in decomposing plant matter, so keep mulch and soil covered with a dry top layer. Also:

- add a few drops of dish soap to an open container of vinegar for a homemade gnat trap;
- keep damp, shady areas well-aerated to prevent fungal growth;
- dab vanilla extract on skin or clothing to keep swarms away; and
- try sodium vapor outdoor lighting to reduce attraction.

Ants



Ants don't just invade picnics: they're drawn to all sorts of garden plants. Halt their march by:

- spreading coffee grounds throughout planted areas — they hate the smell;
- drawing a line of chalk around doors, windows and other entry points (they won't cross it);
- planting fragrant herbs like lavender, rosemary or sage, which ants find repulsive.

Ready to trade in your garden for greener pastures? Give me a call.