

How Does Your Garden Grow?...

GO ORGANIC

For every problem that may arise in your garden, there's a green, organic solution. Instead of using synthetic chemicals, which may leach into and contaminate the soil and groundwater, use these time-tested, organic methods. And remember, the best organic practice is prevention - healthy soil and healthy plants are more resistant to pests and diseases.

- ❁ Keep your soil healthy by adding lots of organic matter, in the form of compost, throughout the growing season. Compost contributes to the health of the soil by supplying nutrients, improving soil texture and drainage, conserving soil moisture and encouraging earthworms and soil microorganisms.
- ❁ Keep your plants healthy by making sure they're not too crowded and that they're getting the proper amount of water (neither too much nor too little). Divide overcrowded plants and plant divisions in another spot in your garden - or give them to friends.
- ❁ Hand-pull weeds when they first appear - before they go to seed. By dealing with weeds immediately, you'll save lots of time later.
- ❁ Inspect your plants regularly, and at the first sign of insect infestation, learn to identify what particular creature is affecting your plant (Not all bugs are bad! Many are beneficial).
- ❁ For a good all-purpose, organic spray to control insects, mix 1 whole garlic bulb, a generous pinch of cayenne pepper and 1 litre of water in a blender. Mix thoroughly, let the solids settle and then pour the liquid into a spray bottle. Spray on the leaves (tops and undersides) and stems of insect-infested plants. You can also use a commercially available organic insecticidal soap, such as Safer's.
- ❁ Birds eat bugs - see Info Sheet #4 for tips to attract birds to your garden.
- ❁ Remove diseased plants from the garden and clean your tools regularly.
- ❁ Consider companion planting in the vegetable garden to keep pests to a minimum. For example, plant marigolds around the tomato patch—the marigolds' strong smell repels insects.