

How to Get Rid of Aphids:

Killing Aphids

- Try spraying infested plants with a strong stream of water; sometimes, all aphids need is a blast to dislodge them. Typically, they are unable to find their way back to the same plant.
- Neem oil, insecticidal soaps, and horticultural oils are effective against aphids, but these substances need to come into contact with the aphids in order to work. Be sure to follow the application instructions provided on the packaging.
- You can often control aphids by wiping or spraying the leaves of the plant with a mild solution of water and a few drops of dish soap. Soapy water should be reapplied every 2-3 days for 2 weeks.
 - One variation of this soap-water mix includes cayenne pepper: Stir together 1 quart water, 1 tsp liquid dish soap, and a pinch of cayenne pepper. Do not dilute before spraying on plants.
- Diatomaceous earth (DE) is a nontoxic, organic material that will dehydrate aphids.
- Warning: Do not apply DE when plants are in bloom, as it will kill pollinators such as bees and butterflies if they come into contact with it.
- **How to Prevent Aphids**
- For fruit or shade trees, spray dormant horticultural oil to kill overwintering aphid eggs.

- Beneficial insects, such as ladybugs, lacewings, and parasitic wasps, will feed on aphids. Attract these insects to your garden by providing an environment that features a range of flowers and foliage plants, as well as access to water. Supplemental populations of these insects can be ordered online and should help control the aphid populations from the start.
- Companion planting can help keep aphids away from your plants in the first place, or can draw aphids away from the plants you want to grow. For example:
 - Aphids are repelled by catnip.
 - Aphids are especially attracted to mustard and nasturtium. Plant these near more valuable plants as traps for the aphids. The aphids will likely go for these plants before your prized tomatoes. (Check your trap plants regularly to keep aphid populations from jumping to your valued plants.)
 - Nasturtiums spoil the taste of fruit tree sap for aphids and will help keep aphids off of broccoli.
 - Garlic and chives repel aphids when planted near lettuce, peas, and rose bushes.

- **Using Alcohol to Control Aphids**

Isopropyl alcohol (also called isopropanol or rubbing alcohol) works fine and is easy to find, but be sure it doesn't have additives. Ethanol (grain alcohol) seems to work best. Alcohol usually comes in 70 percent strength in stores (or 95 percent strength purchased commercially). To make an insecticidal alcohol solution, mix equal parts 70 percent alcohol and water (or, if using 95 percent alcohol, mix 1 part alcohol to 1 ½ parts water).

You can also add alcohol to a soapy emulsion to make it more effective. For example, in a spray bottle, combine 5 cups water, 2 cups isopropyl alcohol, and 1 tablespoon liquid dish soap.

These types of solutions should NOT be sprayed over the entire plant at once. Spray or wipe down only the infested areas. It will only kill the aphids it comes into contact with, so repeated applications may be necessary.

CAUTION: When applying an alcohol or soap spray, or a combination, always test on a small area of the plant first, and apply in the morning or evening, when the Sun is not as intense. Watch the plant for a few days for any adverse reactions before applying more. Plants can be sensitive to alcohol and dish soap. Also, some soaps have additives that can damage plants—select the purest form.