



Alternatives to Chemicals

As a component of Clark County Solid Waste, the NBB Program strives to reduce and/or eliminate the use of toxics in home environments thereby decreasing household hazardous waste, toxic run-off into area streams and rivers, and increasing the livability and overall health of the community.

In its efforts to reduce and/or eliminate the use of toxics in the home environment the NBB program promotes alternatives to chemical pesticides in the garden and cleaning agents in the household. The use of synthetic chemical agents in the yard and garden are non-specific in their scope and kill beneficial organisms as well as the “pests.” By using chemicals in the garden the natural ecosystem is unable to function properly and pest and disease problems can become compounded. Although alternatives can take a little more time and energy the benefits for the garden and community at large far outweigh the few minutes of time saved when using chemical agents.

The NBB program first and foremost **recommends tolerance in the garden.** A little tolerance of pest damage can go a long way in the health of the yard and garden. Use of alternative methods and natural control agents is also recommended because they are pest and disease specific and offer very little, if any, negative impact to the yard and garden.

Listed below are some common yard and garden problems found in the Clark County area and some of their alternative solutions. For a more detailed description or for information on a garden problem that is not listed below please investigate the NBB Literature for the our Alternatives to Pesticides and Bugs and Pests booklets or contact the Naturally Beautiful Backyards Program office at (360) 891-1992 or nbb@clark.wa.gov.

Slugs and snails –

- Prevention - remove garden debris, boards, and any others moist, dark place in the garden that slugs prefer during the daylight hours.
- Physical deterrent - cut slugs in half with scissors, spray with a mixture of one part ammonia to three parts water, drop in a bucket of soapy water
- Barriers - in drier conditions encircle the garden or individual plants with diatomaceous earth, wood ashes, crumbled egg or oyster shells.
- Traps - a store-bought or home-found container buried so the rim is just above ground level filled with beer works wonderfully.

Dandelions –

- Prevention - Do not allow plants to go to seed. Mow or cut heads of dandelions before seed heads form. Mulch beds to discourage weed establishment. After removal of dandelions, reseed the bare area left by the plant to discourage weed germination.
- Control - Hand dig plant getting as much of the root as possible. Spot treat with boiling water, especially effective for treating the root after plant has been pulled.

Black Spot –

- Prevention - Purchase a more disease resistant variety. Prune to improve air circulation. Do not water roses from overhead. Keep foliage as dry as possible.
- Control – Remove infected leaves from the bush and ground. Dust with a finely ground sulfur when temperatures are below 85 degrees.

Along with promoting safer alternatives in the yard and garden, the NBB program promotes the use of alternatives to chemicals in the home environment as well. Modern household cleaners have become as dangerous as the germs and infections that they are promoted to eliminate. By using “green cleaning” methods, the household can become not only a clean environment for the family but a safe one as well. For specific household alternatives please, see the NBB Literature and investigate Clark County Solid Waste’s *Home + Garage – Safer Alternatives: Reducing the Risk* booklet

Looking for information on the chemicals stored in your home or garage? Don’t know how to handle them correctly or where to dispose them? Please, see the NBB Literature and look at Clark County Solid Waste’s *Hazardous Materials in Your Home* booklet.