



FALL | Critters Slugs & Bugs: Simple Remedies

Summary:

Slugs and other bugs can be a pesky presence in the garden. They eat away at seedlings and the leaves of plants, leaving them unable to grow. Later in the season, they will nibble ripening fruits and vegetables. Using our problem solving skills, we are going to try some simple solutions to combat these unwanted critters!

Before Visiting the Garden:

Gather: Small jars or cans, such as a tuna can, teaspoons, water, yeast, dish soap, and newspapers.

Explore: “Capaneus, 2012” by Damien Hirst

Read: *The Slug* by Elise Gravel

In the Garden:

One of the important but less pleasant jobs of a gardener is protecting plants from pests. Today, we will work together to engineer a variety of ways that we can trap a common garden enemy: the slug.

Locate Your Target; Take a Few Moments to Search for Slugs:

- Can you find the trails the slugs leave behind?
- Observe the marks from mouthparts of the slugs in leaves and other fruits and vegetables.
- Observe which plants they like to eat the most.

Questions to Explore:

- Where did you see slugs and other bugs in the garden?
- Did you see what they like to eat?
- What kind of marks do they leave on plants?
- Can you invent ways to stop slugs from eating our plants?

Activity:

Let’s try these simple traps:

1. Wet the newspaper you collected and lay it around the dampest places in the garden near the roots of plants. Check regularly under the newspaper to find any trapped slugs and kill them by drowning them in soapy water.
2. Fill your jars or cans with one teaspoon of yeast to three ounces of water and place in the ground so that the top of the jar or can is level with the ground. Slugs will follow the odor of the yeast and fall into the trap and drown.
3. Now try inventing your own trap: does it work? How? Share it with your other garden friends!

Beyond the Garden | Inventions Everywhere:

One of the key skills a gardener needs to practice is invention—finding creative ways to solve problems from slugs to shade spots. Make a list of three things that need fixing in the garden and work together to brainstorm simple solutions. It doesn’t have to be fancy, but solving puzzles is great for your brain and benefits your plants when you find creative ways to nurture them.

Continue Exploring | Supporting Materials

Additional slug info: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/insects/find/slugs/>