



A note on safety: slug and snail control for pet-owning gardeners

There are a number of ways to control slugs and snails to protect your garden plants but some methods can pose significant health risks to children and pets. Please remember to store ALL garden and household chemicals safely.

Dog owners with concerns about lungworm may also be inclined to reduce the number of slugs and snails in their garden but please note that this alone may not protect dogs from lungworm infection. Your dog should be given a monthly lungworm prevention treatment - visit our webpage www.mbmvetgroup.co.uk/pets-dog-worming for further information.

- **Metalddehyde slug pellets** – widely available at garden centres and supermarkets but if eaten can cause serious toxicity to pets. Seizures and muscle tremors can be fatal.
- **Ferric phosphate pellets** – if eaten these can cause gastrointestinal irritation leading to vomiting, diarrhoea and, occasionally, more serious consequences of iron poisoning.
- **Salt** – the old-fashioned method of sprinkling salt will kill slugs but salt in the soil is bad for plants too. Pets may enjoy the taste and it can be harmful if a large amount is eaten at once – it can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, weakness and seizures. Salt poisoning can be fatal in extreme cases.
- **'Beer traps'** – this old-fashioned method involves sinking jars or containers of small amounts of beer into the soil, then covering them securely to keep pets and children out while leaving a small space for slugs and snails to slither in. The small amount of alcohol is unlikely to cause significant or lasting harm if inadvertently drunk by pets, but could cause lethargy, incoordination and vomiting.
- **Coffee grounds** – these deter slugs and may kill them. Their high caffeine content could potentially cause problems for pets, but their unpleasant taste means a pet should be unlikely to eat them.
- **Slug-repellent mulches and mats** – a pet-friendly option. A layer of sharp grit, crushed shells, wool mats or wool pellets can be laid around plants, beds and borders. These will deter slugs but will not reduce the number of slugs in the garden.
- **Copper** – tape and bands used around pots or single plants. Very pet and child friendly, these deter slugs but won't reduce their numbers.
- **Biological slug control** using nematodes – very pet and child friendly – this can control slug numbers very effectively if repeated every six weeks.
- **Collect and remove slugs and snails by hand** – the ultimate safe, low cost method! Uprturned plant-pots or trays can be placed for slugs and snails to hide in, making this job easier.