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Insect control in the flower garden

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Quick Facts

Satisfactory insect control begins with proper insect identification.
The effectiveness of chemical control depends upon selecting the correct insecticide, following labeled directions, timing and proper application.
Early treatment of insects gives better protection of plants.

Many of the insecticides suggested here are contained in various commercial all-purpose rose and flower dusts. Most of these contain malathion or methoxychlor in combination with other insecticides.

These combinations will control many insect problems. However, there are many insects that can be controlled more effectively by using a specific insecticide. (See Table 2.)

Select the insecticide that will control the insects which are a problem. For most home gardens, dust formulations are more convenient to use than liquid concentrations.

Read the label before applying the insecticide to determine the correct amount and the proper method of applying the material.

Most insecticides do not perform efficiently at temperatures below 50°F (10°C) and will not give satisfactory results at these lower temperatures. Rain within a few hours after application will wash off much insecticide and make it ineffective.

For the most part, it is best to apply an insecticide when the temperature is above 50°F (10°C) but below 95°F (35°C) and there is no rain expected for at least 12 hours.

Apply the insecticide at the proper time for better control of insects. Early treatment affords better protection of plants and prevents insects from multiplying.

Make thorough treatments, especially on the lower parts of plants and the undersides of leaves.

Table 1: Insecticides for flower gardens.

Material	Dusts percent	Sprays amount/gallon (3.8 l) water*
1. Carbaryl (Sevin)	5	6 teaspoons of 50% WP
2. Orthene	none	4 teaspoons of 15% EC
3. Diazinon (Spectracide)	2	2 teaspoons of 25% EC
4. Lindane	none	6 teaspoons of 20% EC
5. DiSyston	none	2% granules only, used as directed to soil
6. Malathion	4	2 teaspoons of 57% EC
7. Meta-Systox	none	1½ teaspoons of 25% EC
8. Methoxychlor	5	3 teaspoons of 50% WP 2 teaspoons of 25% EC

**one teaspoon equals 5 milliliters*
WP, wettable powder
EC, emulsifiable concentrate (liquid)

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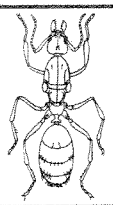
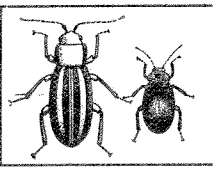
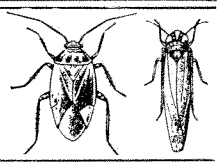
Table 2: Insect pests of flowers.

Insect	Attack methods	
Ant	Ants do not feed on plants but loosen the soil around the roots. They also care for aphids and feed on the "honey dew" secreted by aphids or on the sap exuded by some plant buds.	
Insecticides 3, 4 (see Table 1) Dust or spray plants thoroughly.		
Aphid	Aphids are small, soft-bodied insects that suck plant juices. (For more information, see SA sheet 5.511, Aphids.)	
Insecticides 5, 6, 7 (see Table 1) Dust or spray the entire plant thoroughly. As a preventive spread one pound (.45 kilograms) of DiSyston 2-percent granules over each 100 feet (30.5 meters) of row or furrow and water thoroughly. DiSyston is highly toxic to humans. Follow directions carefully.		
Blister beetle	Blister beetles are large, long-legged, active insects that strip foliage from plants.	
Insecticides 1, 3, 4 (see Table 1) Dust or spray plants thoroughly.		
Cutworm	Cutworms cut off plants at night and spend days curled up in the soil.	
Insecticides 1, 2, 4 , 6 (see Table 1) Dust or spray plants and surrounding soil. Protect transplants with paper or metal colars placed around the stems.		
Grass-hopper	Grasshoppers attack most plants. (For more information, see SA sheet 5.536, *Grasshopper control in flower and vegetable gardens.)*	
Insecticides 3, 4, 6 (see Table 1) Dust or spray garden and surrounding grassy and weedy areas.		
Iris borer	Iris borers are large borers that feed in the rhizomes of the plants.	
Insecticide 8 (see Table 1) Dust or spray weekly for four weeks when new growth starts. Prevent reinfestation by transplanting rhizomes every three or four years and discarding rhizomes that are borer-infested.		
Leaf beetle	Leaf beetles are chewing insects that feed on both foliage and flowers. They also will make tiny holes in leaves.	
Insecticides 1, 2, 3, 6, 8 (see Table 1) Dust or spray plants thoroughly.		
Leaf-feeding caterpillar	Caterpillars damage plants by eating the foliage, boring into flower buds or rolling the leaves.	
Insecticides 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 (see Table 1) Dust or spray plants thoroughly.		

Insect	Attack methods	
Pill bug	Pill bugs feed on decaying organic matter as well as on plants. They curl up into a ball when disturbed.	
Insecticides 1, 4, 8 (see Table 1) Remove boards and trash under which pill bugs hide. Spray or dust plants and surrounding area thoroughly.		
Plant bug and leaf-hopper	These are active insects that suck plant juices, causing flowers and foliage to become spotted and blasted.	
Insecticides 3, 6, 8 (see Table 1) Dust or spray plants thoroughly.		
Rose slug	Small slugs (sawfly larvae) feed on undersides of rose leaves, skeletonizing them and causing them to turn brown.	
Insecticides 6, 8 (see Table 1) Dust or spray plants thoroughly.		
Slug	Slugs are large, soft-bodied creatures that leave a slimy trail as they move. (For more information, see SA sheet 5.515, *Slugs.*)	
Scatter a metaldehyde or mesurol slug and snail bait around the plants according to directions on the package, or spray with carbaryl (Sevin) (see Table 1).		
Red spider mite	These are tiny mites that cause foliage to turn gray and die. (See SA sheet 5.507, *Spider mites,* for more information.)	
Insecticides 2, 5, 7 (see Table 1) Spray with a miticide such as Kelthane, Tedion, Dimite or Chlorobenzilate, or spray with one of the insecticides listed above, or spread one pound (.45 kg) of DiSyston 2-percent granules over each 100 feet (30.5 m) of row or furrow and water thoroughly.		
Stalk borer	Stalk borers are found in the stems of plants.	
Insecticide 8 (see Table 1) Dust growing plants frequently and thoroughly. Destroy dead plant debris in the fall. Borers also can be removed from the stalks by slitting and pinching the stems.		
Thrip	Thrips are tiny, active insects that cause foliage to become spotted and flowers to be deformed. They are a serious pest of gladiolus.	
Insecticides 2, 3, 5, 7 (see Table 1) Dust gladiolus corms in the fall with methoxychlor. Dust gladiolus and other flowers with methoxychlor. Spray with methoxychlor, Diazinon or Meta-Systox. Soil treatment of 2-percent DiSyston granules also give effective control.		