

RODALE'S Organic Life

Your Guide to Growing Tomatillos How To Make A Natural Pest Spray That's Safe And Effective

This all-purpose bug control combines the repellent effects of garlic, onion, and hot pepper with the insecticidal properties of soap.

by ROL Staff April 3, 2015

For decades our editors have collected pest-control remedies and recipes from readers. Several ideas were repeatedly offered as effective pest controls. So we combined several of these home remedies to make an all-purpose spray out of ingredients found in most kitchens. This spray combines the repellent effects of garlic, onion, and hot pepper with the insecticidal and surfactant properties of soap. Keep in mind that sprays that contain soap may harm natural enemies and pollinating insects. Apply it only to prevent or ease a specific pest problem.

Nowadays, there are also commercial organic sprays that list garlic oil and/or hot pepper as the active ingredient.

Home gardeners can try homemade all-purpose spray against any leaf-eating pests in the garden, and make a note of what pests are successfully controlled. Certified organic producers should check regulations before using this type of homemade spray.

Precautions

The ingredients can cause painful skin and eye irritation. When preparing and applying, wear rubber gloves and keep the mixture well away from your eyes and nose.

Ingredients

- 1 garlic bulb
- 1 small onion
- 1 teaspoon of powdered cayenne pepper
- 1 quart of water
- 1 tablespoon liquid dish soap

Chop, grind, or liquefy garlic and onion. Add cayenne pepper and mix with water. Steep 1 hour, strain through cheesecloth, then add liquid dish soap. Mix well. Spray your plants thoroughly, including the undersides of the leaves. Store the mixture for up to a week in a labeled, covered container in the refrigerator.