

## Alternatives to pesticides



Pesticides are chemicals used to kill pests and increase crop yield. However, they have negative impacts on the environment. Pesticides can contaminate soil, water, and air, harming not only pests but also beneficial insects, birds, and mammals. Additionally, pesticides can accumulate in the food chain, leading to health problems.



Our own research has shown that pesticides in gardens lead to a lower diversity and abundance of bird species, especially in house sparrows. Fortunately, there are alternatives to pesticides that are safer for the environment when gardening or farming, including:

- Companion planting (look at our handy download on this for more information).
- Crop rotation where different crops are planted in a given area each year to prevent the build-up of pests.
- Natural home remedies.
- Manual de-weeding, mulching, pruning affected plants and mowing.
- **Encouraging natural predators such as insects, birds and bats which eat pests.**

### Natural home remedies

These are some of our natural home remedies you could use to discourage pests:

- Garlic spray to prevent aphids.
- Dried seaweed to target the slugs due to its high salt content.

- Use an oil-based spray on high-risk trees to remove overwintering eggs.
- Use fleece to cover vegetables and protect them from pests.
- Sticky barriers placed around plants can stop weevils.
- You could also use pre-made natural barriers such as those produced by Zembra which uses olive pomace to protect plants from pests.

## Encouraging natural predators

You can do this very easily by following our 5 essentials; providing water, food, shelter, a place to nest and by ditching the pesticides in your garden. By providing a range of flowers, shrubs and trees that flower and fruit at different times of the year, you can encourage wildlife into your garden year-round. Nature is your best defence when it comes to protecting your plants, your favourite feathered friends will be more than happy to eat those pesky caterpillars and aphids!



If you decide to ditch the pesticides, let us know what top tips are and share some photos on our socials @SongBirdSBS or send a photo to [dawn-chorus@songbirdsurvival.org.uk](mailto:dawn-chorus@songbirdsurvival.org.uk)



Learn more about Gardens for Birds and what you can do to help all birds and wildlife at: [www.songbirdsos.org/gardens-for-birds](http://www.songbirdsos.org/gardens-for-birds)

