

# What's Bugging You?

## BRITAIN'S GARDEN PESTS

As the product of many hours of planting, watering and pruning, our gardens are our pride and joy. It's a different story for creepy crawlies, who see our gardens as nothing more than a larder of their favourite greens.

From nibbled leaves to damaged and dry foliage, here's how to battle the bugs and stop them from gorging on your garden.

## TOP 10 GARDEN PESTS

So, which pests are plaguing British gardens? According to data released by the Royal Horticultural Society, these were the most common pests that left gardeners scratching their heads in 2016:

### 1. SLUGS & SNAILS



Slugs and snails are common in British gardens and are particularly fond of vegetables, ornamental plants and seedlings. Both slugs and snails have rasping tongues, which they use to nibble holes in your greenery.

#### Signs

- ✓ Slime trails on leaves, stems, soil and pathways.
- ✓ Irregular holes in leaves, stems and flowers.
- ✓ Some slugs can tunnel into potato tubers and bulbs.



#### How to control it

Welcome predators into your garden, like thrushes, hedgehogs and toads.

Place traps — sink a jar half-filled with beer into the soil near vulnerable plants. Check and empty them regularly.

Scatter slug pellets around plants.

#### GARDEN HACK!

Slugs and snails don't like munching on foxgloves, fennel and Iceland poppies, so they're great additions to your garden.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

British gardeners use over 400 billion slug pellets every year.

### 2. VINE WEEVIL

The small vine weevil beetle's favourite dish is ornamental plants and fruits, preferably served up in containers. They dine on your plants all year round, with adult weevils eating the leaves during spring and summer and grubs munching on plant roots in autumn and winter.



#### Signs

- ✓ Irregular-shaped notches on plant leaves in summer.
- ✓ Withering or dead plants in autumn and winter.



#### How to control it

Welcome predators into your garden, like birds, hedgehogs and toads.

During summer, place newspaper around plants and gently shake the shrubs to remove the beetles from the leaves.

Attach sticky barriers around plant pots.

#### GARDEN HACK!

Plants that are grown on open ground are less likely to be damaged by vine weevil than those in containers.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The fuchsia gall mite is unable to survive temperatures below 5C.

### 3. FUCHSIA GALL MITE



As the name suggests, fuchsia gall mites specifically attack fuchsia plants. Essentially, they cause the shoot of the plant to swell, distort and discolour. The mites are most active between May and September, although they are too small to be seen without a microscope.

#### Signs

- ✓ Plants stop producing normal foliage and flowers.
- ✓ Foliage becomes distorted and yellowish-green or reddish-pink tissue forms instead of flowers.



#### How to control it

Cut off infected tips, although regrowth can also be affected. Be warned, pesticides are largely ineffective.

#### GARDEN HACK!

Some species of fuchsia are less susceptible to fuchsia gall mite than others, including *Fuchsia thymifolia* and *Fuchsia venusta*.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The fuchsia gall mite is unable to survive temperatures below 5C.

### 4. GLASSHOUSE THRIPS

Targeting vegetables and ornamental plants in greenhouses, glasshouse thrips feed on plants by sucking sap from the surface of the leaves. They can also affect some outdoor plants, including *Viburnum tinus* hedges.



#### Signs

- ✓ Leaf surfaces become mottled and silvery, especially during summer.
- ✓ Foliage marked with red-brown spots.
- ✓ Distorted growth of flower buds.



#### How to control it

Attach sticky traps near to or among the plants to capture the thrips.

Introduce predatory controls, like *Amblyseius* species and *Hypoaspis* species to combat the bugs.

#### GARDEN HACK!

Cover greenhouse plants with netting or fleece to create a barrier between plants.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The waxy substance is produced as a defence mechanism against pesticides and predators.

### 5. WOOLLY APHID



Think your edible and ornamental apple trees have fallen victim to mould? Take a closer look — it could be woolly aphids. Disguised as white fluff, they feed on sap from branches and trunks between April and October.

#### Signs

- ✓ Trunk and branches are covered in a fluffy white waxy material, especially around areas of thinner bark.
- ✓ Soft, lumpy bark in places — this is most notable in winter.



#### How to control it

Invite predators like ladybirds, lacewings and hoverfly larvae into your garden. In spring and early summer, light infestations can be scrubbed with a stiff-bristled brush.

#### GARDEN HACK!

Pruning out affected branches can help minimise the issue.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The waxy substance is produced as a defence mechanism against pesticides and predators.

### 6. TORTRIX MOTH

Despite being labelled a moth, the tortrix moth is most detrimental to plants while it is still a caterpillar. The most prominent species — and arguably the most problematic for British gardeners — is the carnation tortrix moth and the light brown apple moth.



#### Signs

- ✓ Leaves bound together with silky threads
- ✓ Dry, brown leaves



#### How to control it

Squeeze the bound leaves to crush the caterpillars within.

Set up a pheromone trap — using a cardboard box, sticky sheet and pheromone pellet — to attract and capture male tortrix moths.

#### GARDEN HACK!

Tortrix moths can affect plants in greenhouses all year round. Establishing pheromone traps within this confined space can minimise their impact.

### 7. BOX TREE MOTH



Despite being relatively unknown in the UK until 2011, the caterpillar form of the box tree moth is now widespread in London gardens and other nearby areas. The bugs specifically target box plants between April and October.

#### Signs

- ✓ Yellow, flat eggs laid on the underside of box leaves.
- ✓ Holes, visible webbing and caterpillars on leaves.



#### How to control it

Remove caterpillars by hand.

Insecticides can be used on extreme infestations, although thorough spraying is required. Proceed with caution.

#### GARDEN HACK!

The impact of box tree moths is often confused with box blight, the browning and shedding of leaves caused by fungus.

### 8. ROSEMARY BEETLE

The bug on our list with the most refined palette is the rosemary beetle. Originating in Southern Europe, the beetle favours rosemary, lavender, sage and thyme all year round, but especially between August and April.



#### Signs

- ✓ Leaves reduced to short stumps.
- ✓ Damage to flowers.
- ✓ Grey-brown leaves.



#### How to control it

Physically remove the beetles from the plants by hand or by placing newspaper underneath and gently shaking the branches.

Although more effective on larvae, pesticides can be used. Make sure the pesticide is suitable for use and always follow instructions.

#### GARDEN HACK!

Hang bird nesting in your garden in winter and feeding boxes in spring to welcome birds into your garden to eat the beetles. The beetles begin feeding and mating in late summer.

### 9. VIBURNUM BEETLE



The viburnum beetle specifically targets viburnum plants. During heavy attacks, serious damage can be done to the foliage, most of which is caused by young larvae in spring.

#### Signs

- ✓ Holes in leaf surface, while larger veins remain.
- ✓ Visible larvae and beetles on the leaf surface.



#### How to control it

Chemical treatments are best used on plants during April and May, if signs of feeding are present, as this is when the larvae is newly hatched and minimal damage has been done.

#### GARDEN HACK!

Viburnum plants are able to independently combat the beetles, by growing a hard tissue over the beetles' eggs to crush and destroy them.

### 10. ANTS

Unlike the other bugs mentioned in the list, ants do not actually damage the plants themselves. Rather, they like to construct cosy nests in the most inconvenient of places — like the middle of our lawns, for example.



#### Signs

- ✓ Lumpy lawn or patches of raised soil.



#### How to control it

It's best to leave nests alone, as disturbing the colony could cause more nests to form.

Where necessary, brush the excavated soil on a dry day to remove the nest.

#### GARDEN HACK!

Did you know ants can defend aphids from their predators? If you're trying to combat your aphid problem, ants could be undoing all your hard work!

## SOURCES

- [www.rhs.org.uk/advice/advice-blogs/help-and-advice/March-2017/2016-pest-disease-top-10](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/advice-blogs/help-and-advice/March-2017/2016-pest-disease-top-10)
- [www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=231](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=231) - [www.slugoff.co.uk/slug-facts-facts](http://www.slugoff.co.uk/slug-facts-facts)
- [www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=234](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=234) - [www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=512](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=512)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/advice/pests\\_and\\_diseases/identifying/7rhtrips](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/advice/pests_and_diseases/identifying/7rhtrips)
- [www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=724](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=724) - [www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=556](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=556)
- [www.gardeningknowhow.com/plant-problems/pests/insects/woolly-aphid-control.htm](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/plant-problems/pests/insects/woolly-aphid-control.htm)
- [www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=860](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=860) - [www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=96](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=96)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/advice/pests\\_and\\_diseases/identifying/rosemary\\_leaf\\_beetle](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/advice/pests_and_diseases/identifying/rosemary_leaf_beetle)
- [www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=556](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=556) - [www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=503](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=503)
- [www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/gardeningadvice/11566155/How-to-win-the-battle-against-the-viburnum-beetle.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/gardeningadvice/11566155/How-to-win-the-battle-against-the-viburnum-beetle.html)
- [www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/394705/Beware-the-fuchsia-gall-mite.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/394705/Beware-the-fuchsia-gall-mite.html)
- [entomology.ca.uky.edu/e1219](http://entomology.ca.uky.edu/e1219)

COURTESY OF WWW.COMPOSTDIRECT.COM

