



One of the commonest gardening concerns I hear is about controlling slugs in the garden. I have a book called "50 Ways to Kill a Slug", which has some interesting suggestions. However, if you really want to get rid of slugs you need to think about why they are in your garden in the first place. Slugs, in particular, congregate in damp, warm environments. They are predominately night feeders and so need to have somewhere damp and safe to hide during the day.

If you really want to reduce slugs in your garden try these three steps

Step One - remove or reduce the places they have to hide.

- Raise any large clay or plastic pots or troughs up on 'feet' to reduce damp hide- outs
- Do not leave any plastic bags or sheeting lying around or use sealed black composting bins; both give food/shelter to slugs
- Clear away dead leaves and flower stalks from pots and borders
- Weed regularly

Step Two - plant things that they do not like to eat such as

Ajuga reptans, Alchemilla mollis – Lady's mantle, Japanese Anemone, Aquilegia – Columbine or Granny's bonnets, Astilbe, Astrantia, Bluebells, Daffodils, Epimedium, Euphorbia, Ferns, Foxglove, Hardy Geranium, Geum, Heather, Hellebore, Hesperis matronalis – Sweet rocket, Pulmonaria, Papaver – perennial poppy, Sedum, Grasses – Panicum, Miscanthus, Carex and most shrubs including Roses, Weigela, Hydrangeas, Cornus, Philadelphus, Viburnum, Azalea, Rhododendron etc.

If you are a vegetable gardener this is more difficult as many leafy vegetables you may want to grow are subject to slug damage. In this case, plant onions or chives around your lettuces and spinach to put off the slugs and/or use sheep wool pellets as a barrier.

Step Three - encourage slug predators

Ponds and bog gardens provide a great habitat for *frogs, newts and toads*, which will reward you by eating your slugs.

Leave a 13cm square hole at the bottom of your garden fence or wall to allow slug-eating *hedgehogs* and *common shrews* into your garden and make a home for them. For more hedgehog ideas see <http://www.wildaboutgardensweek.org.uk/Downloads/Hedgehog-16pp-Booklet-FINAL>

Small log piles, open compost areas or piles of leaves will attract slug-eating *ground beetles*.