

Slug back against slugs

Slugs look slow and harmless, but they can devastate flower plantings, especially in shaded areas. Believe it or not, each slug has about 100 rows of teeth, with about 90 teeth per row. That's 9,000 teeth! Wow! No wonder slugs can devour so many leaves in a single night!

One of the best ways to control slugs is to put out aluminum pie tins, tuna cans, or other shallow containers filled with stale beer. Sink the tins into the ground. The slugs can't resist the beer, climbing into the tin and drowning inside (what a way to go!).

A study from Cornell University showed that slugs will drink almost any beer except for the non-alcoholic beers. Thick and heavy (often imported) beers often work better than "light" beers. If you don't have any beer, fill your traps with sugary water. Evidently, slugs have a sweet tooth among their 9,000 choppers.


Diatomaceous earth also works well. Sprinkle this gritty sand around the base of the



plants. When the slugs crawl over the grit, their stomachs rip open. Gross, but effective. Diatomaceous earth is available in the organic gardening section of garden centers.



Another strategy is to place boards or upside down flower pots near susceptible plantings. Lift up the boards or pots to reveal the hidden slugs.

Slug baits containing metaldehyde are very effective. Follow the instructions on the package carefully. Metaldehyde should not come into contact with vegetable plants. 

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