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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

SHARING
SECRETS

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“How have you dealt with particular pest problems in your garden?”

Responses to this query revealed that many members have created gardens where pests are not a problem. Not surprisingly, we received requests for specific solutions to raccoon, mole and squirrel problems, so let us know if any of you have magical powers. Thanks to all who shared with us!

My philosophy has been to avoid growing plants that suffer major pest attack, and I've removed some things I really liked because I don't want to spend my gardening time spraying and struggling. My garden is informal and I put up with minor disfigurement.

Sometimes it helps to move the plant to another location or water it more. I've discovered that spider mite and scale are attracted to plants that are too dry or are unhappy. For aphids and spittlebug, I hit them with the hose spray and wait until they go away. Aphids on my *Aloe striata* are a problem as they can spoil the appearance for years because the new leaves develop so slowly.

When I do feel I have to spray, I use Volck oil which I have found works on many kinds of insects and also on mildew. For snails, decollate snails seemed to help, and I use Sluggo, which is not harmful to pets or wildlife. Pests such as birds, squirrels, and raccoons have defeated me; they eat all my fruit before it is ripe. - CR

Brown garden snails are a problem in our front yard garden even though our small army of search and destroy decollate snails has made some progress. Barbara goes out at night with a flashlight and places the bad snails in a paper bag containing salt (\$3.59 for a 25-pound bag at Costco). I prefer tossing the snails into the street where passing cars crunch the numbers. - RC

Sometimes you just have to accept that you won't win and sit back and enjoy the crazy squirrels or squirrelly cats. - BC

My friendly neighborhood opossum drops by regularly to eat slugs hiding among pots. -KA

Get possums to eat your snails. - *DW*

For giant white fly on fibrous begonias, try Worm Gold. Applied once in the spring keeps them away! - *RD*

Keep a hose handy or a Super Soaker squirt gun for squirrels or cats. - *LB*

I don't have any. They fight it out and leave me alone. - *JJ*

I've told those people to go back home and trample plants in their own garden. - *SL*

Anonymous Contributors

Rose Slugs (Sawfly larvae) are tiny green worms that decimate leaves on rose bushes by leaving tiny little holes in them. I pull off any leaf with even one hole in it and squish each little green worm (on the back of the leaf) with thumb and forefinger.