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## Nature News: Keeping Pests Under Control



This homemade flytrap is a safe and easy way to get rid of unwanted houseflies and fruit flies.

By Angela McLaughlin - Ramona Home Journal • Thu, Sep 06, 2018

You wake up in the morning and head to the kitchen to start a pot of coffee and grab a blueberry muffin. You've been dreaming about that muffin all night, but unbeknownst to you, you forgot to tightly secure its container. You reach for one and see that it is covered in ants, and there is an army of them marching across your countertop. It seems they've made themselves at home while you were asleep.

We've all had similar situations. Our first instinct is often to reach for the ant killer and poison them before they can get to anything else. But you may want to consider another option.

### The Problem with Poisons

The use of toxic chemicals for pest control has far-reaching and long-lasting effects. Water contamination from pesticide use is one of many detrimental effects that may be seen across the country. And according to the Environmental Protection Agency, the use of pesticides is suspected to be one of the leading causes of pollinator die-offs, affecting the health of honeybees. These are merely a couple of examples of the dark side of pesticides.

Environmentally friendly methods for pest control do not just benefit the environment — they benefit your pets' health, your children's health and your own health.

Though it may seem like a quick fix to utilize pesticides, it is not in anyone's best interest. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the average American has more than 40 different pesticides in his or her bloodstream. Side effects of these chemicals may range from headaches and nausea, to lung damage and cancer.

Children and pets are at an even greater risk. And wildlife may suffer, as well. From their impacts on bee populations to secondary rodenticide toxicity in wildlife and pets, these chemicals are no joke.

Let's take a look at a few pest-control methods that are not only friendlier to wildlife and the environment, but will be less likely to cause you and your family harm.

### Prevention

The first step to pest control is prevention. Seal up areas of your home where pests may gain entry. Look at your windows, doors, floors, roof — any area that makes contact with the outside. Repair ripped screens, broken floorboards, and holes in your roof or siding.

The next part of prevention is keeping a clean home and yard. Nothing screams "come on in, pests" more than a dirty home. Clean your living area regularly, so stray crumbs don't attract critters. In your yard, make sure to seal up trash and recycling containers.

### Ants, Flies and Cockroaches

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The heat of the summer brings out hordes of ants. As ants travel, they leave chemical trails in their wake that act as a guide. A simple mixture of soapy water sprayed on the path will remove this trail and prevent them from following it.

Ants and cockroaches are two pests nobody wants in their home. Aside from keeping a clean house, utilize cedar oil as a nontoxic repellent that is safe to use around most humans and pets.

Fruit flies and other houseflies are attracted to many things in our homes. An easy way to control them is by creating a homemade flytrap. Simply take a cup or jar and fill it with apple cider vinegar and a couple of drops of dish soap. Then, cover the container with plastic wrap, poking small entry holes in the top. The flies will be attracted to the sweet liquid, and the dish soap won't allow them to perch on the surface of the water. The flies likely won't be able to find the holes to escape and will either drown, or be trapped until you can take care of them yourself.

### Spiders

Spiders are beneficial creatures, often capturing and consuming other pests. Whether you have a fear of arachnids or are just looking to keep spiders away from certain areas, there are nonlethal and nontoxic ways of repelling them.

An easy way to repel them is by mixing warm water and a small amount of dish soap in a spray bottle, and then adding an essential oil such as peppermint, lavender or tea tree. Shake the bottle to mix the solution and spray it on points of entry, such as around windows and doorframes. This may also be used in corners where spiders are often seen. The spray should be reapplied regularly.

There are many other options for eco-friendly pest control. Just remember to choose solutions that benefit humans, pets, wildlife and the environment.

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