

Insects

All gardeners know there are good bugs and bad bugs. To deal with the bad bugs that eat or destroy our plants, some of us recommend the following products or approaches. However, we offer these suggestions with a major caveat: It's up to you to figure out what's eating your plants. You can ask more seasoned gardeners or you can search the web or get a book out of the library on gardening and common pests. We can't tell you what's eating your plants without looking at the damage or the pest. The Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati offers expert guidance via its Helpline, too. See <http://www.civiccgardencenter.org/resources/helpline/>.

Tomato horn worms: [Great photos and explanations here](#)

They're a juicy fat worm that can get up to about 5 inches long and by themselves, they're munching crunching little critters that will eat up tomato plants and other plants. You'll see them along the stems. However, as shown in this photo, wasp larvae get attached to horn worms and suck the life out of them. That's great --- wasps are good in a garden.

Remember that we're trying for organic or not-bad-for-the-planet approaches, please.

Squish the bugs: Sometimes the most effective approach is to pick the bugs off and squish them. Save this for a day that's been bad at the office. It's therapeutic. This is especially good for the little red bugs that you'll find underneath squash leaves.

Bacillus thuringiensis : This is great for caterpillars and worms on broccoli and cabbages.

Neem oil: This is commercially available and is a detergent. Good for the little white bugs.

Pepper spray: Some folks swear by a solution made of 2 TBSP red pepper and a gallon of water. Research this to see if it makes sense for your insect issue.

Please note the following important clarification about the use of tobacco as an insect deterrent:

Tobacco as an insect deterrent is officially organic as it dissipates quickly, but it is highly toxic and virtually never found in products commercially available to the public due to its toxicity and the Environmental Services has recommended banning use effective 2014. Gloves and a mask are necessary even for professionals.