

Natural pest control  
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Prevention is the first step in pest control and uncollected garbage will naturally attract rats and cockroaches and flies.

Don't endanger your family's health! Find out how you can rid household pests using non-toxic methods. MEERA MURUGESAN writes.

IT used to be a standard fixture in every kitchen at one time, the cupboard with fine wire netting on its doors and its legs standing on containers filled with water to keep cooked food safe from ants and flies.

Your grandmother may not have realised it but just by investing in that cupboard, she was practising intelligent pest management. Intelligent because it did the job and didn't jeopardise the health of her family or the environment.

But for many of us today, keeping household pests in check means reaching for that can of bug spray or picking up the phone to book the services of a professional exterminator.

Pest control is just common sense as our grandparents knew very well and there are simple steps every household can take to control pests the safe, healthy way, said Stephen L. Tvedten, a renowned advocate of promoting safe alternatives to chemical pesticides. He was in Malaysia recently at the invitation of the Consumers Association of Penang (CAP).

Tvedten, from the United States, who is president of the intelligent pest management company Get Set, Inc, has 45 years of experience in pest control. He said he has yet to know of anyone who has actually managed to eradicate household pests using poisons.

Tvedten explained that there are about 50-60 million insect species on earth and we have only identified about one million. Of this million, only 1,000 have been classified as pests and despite extensive use of pesticides for over 60 years, we have not managed to eliminate even one pest species.

In fact, the opposite has happened. Pests have become resistant to almost every type of poison and despite increasingly stronger doses of pesticides being used, the problem persists.

“So, it's not working but we continue to use it and put the health of our families at risk. Even household pets like cats and dogs are more prone to allergies these days because these toxins remain in the environment.”

Tvedten believes that if a house has already been sprayed or treated twice with pesticides and the pest problem still persists, it's time homeowners accept that

it's not working and consider safer options.

Many of these alternative options are outlined in his book, *The Best Control II*, which provides tried and tested solutions to control pests, ranging from the creative and complex to plain common sense.

One approach for targeting cockroaches, for example, involves using duct tape placed sticky side up wherever cockroaches move around, whether it's under drawers, behind refrigerators or under the bed. Masking tape is used to keep the edges of the duct tape secure on the surface.

If a male cockroach gets caught in this sticky trap, it will attract the females which will also be trapped and vice versa.

Entering a dark room using a red light and a vacuum cleaner also works wonders.

Cockroaches cannot see the red light and won't disperse as they normally would when lights are switched on but the homeowner will be able to visibly spot where they are and suck them up with the vacuum cleaner.

A little talcum powder added to the vacuum bag (for dry vacuum cleaners) will kill off the cockroaches. This process, repeated over two weeks helps get rid of cockroaches.

If it's a spray you want, Tvedten recommends a solution made from one garlic clove, one onion, a tablespoon of cayenne pepper and a quart of water. Allow it to steep for one hour before straining and adding a tablespoon of liquid soap and spraying it around the house to keep cockroaches and ants under control.

Similarly, mice can be safely killed simply by using a bowl of beer as bait but the beer mustn't be flat (still foamy). The beer is poured into a shallow dish lightly oiled first with corn oil and once consumed, the rats bellies explode because they can't belch.

Aspartame (artificial sweetener) is also an excellent bait and once eaten, rats usually die after four days.

To prevent termites, Tvedten has found that a solution made of borax and hot water that's sprayed repeatedly onto raw wood is effective. For flies, a sponge soaked in lavender oil and set in a saucer can be an effective deterrent.

"It's not rocket science. Many of these suggestions may be known to people, others are just common sense but still people persist in turning to poisonous pesticides."

But Tvedten said all pest control should first begin with prevention. Besides good

sanitation, fixing a simple insect screen door or window (and keeping it closed), ensuring cracks in the wall or gaps in the floors are sealed, eliminating plumbing leaks, not leaving food out that can attract pests or dirty dishes in the sink and regularly de-cluttering our living space are crucial.

In fact, just by washing our garbage bins regularly, we can reduce flies by the 1,000s.

“We just have to ask ourselves how we can solve these problems in a natural way, the way people used to before they started turning to pesticides.”

Tvedten’s book *The Best Control II* contains over 2,800 safe and effective alternatives to pesticides and can be downloaded for free at [thebestcontrol2.com](http://thebestcontrol2.com)

### Other remedies

#### Cockroaches

Make a solution of baking soda and powdered sugar and leave it as bait on problem areas or place bay leaves, talcum powder or baking soda around cracks in rooms.

#### Mosquitoes

Burning citronella candles helps. Turpentine and eucalyptus oils, garlic extracts, surface oils and extracts of orange and lemon peel help control mosquito larvae.

#### Flies

A home-made fly repellent spray can be made from one part liquid dish soap, one part vinegar and three parts water. A pot of basil on a table or window also helps reduce house flies.

#### Termites

Push lollipops into the ground (stick first) wherever you find termite activity. The lollipops will attract ants which will attack and kill the termites.

#### Ants

Draw a chalk line or sprinkle talcum powder or medicated body powder or baking soda in places you do not want them to enter.

## **Strange Prevention for Flies: Harmless and worth a try.**

We went with some out of town friends to Sweetie Pies on Sunday for breakfast, and we sat in the enclosed patio section beside the house. We happened to notice a couple of zip lock baggies pinned to a post and a wall. The bags were half filled with water, each contained 4 pennies, and they were zipped shut. Naturally we were curious! Ms Sweetie told us that these baggies kept the flies away! So naturally we were even more curious! We actually watched some flies come in the open window, stand around on the window

sill, and then fly out again. And there were no flies in the eating area! This morning I checked this out on Goggle. Below are comments on this fly control idea. I'm now a believer! More comments not included here were about pet dogs and fly problems.

Zip-lock water bags, Sue says:

Many people swear that a zip-lock bag filled half-way with water, a few pennies and attached over entry-ways will repel flies. No one yet knows how or why it works, but there is speculation that it has something to do with the way the moving water refracts light. If you have tried this please use the comments form at the bottom of the page to share your results with the rest of us.

Ann Says:

October 5th, 2008 at 5:51 pm

I did tried the ziplock bag and pennies this weekend. I have a horse trailer with full LQ. The flys were very bad this weekend while I was camping. I put the baggie with pennies above the door of the LQ. NOT ONE FLY came in the trailer. The horse trailer part had many. Not sure why it works but it does!

Danielle Martin Says:

September 20th, 2008 at 8:43 pm

Fill a ziplock bag with water and 5 or 6 pennies and hang it in the problem area. In my case it was a particular window in my home. It had a slight but significant passage way for insects. Every since I have done that, it has kept flies and wasps away. Some say, that wasps and flies mistake the bag for some sort of other insect nest and are threatened by this.

Maggie Says:

June 7th, 2009 at 11:40 am

I swear by the plastic bag of water trick I have them on side porch (our house entry) and all around the basement door. We saw these in Northeast Mo at an Amish grocery store & have used them since. They say it works because a fly sees a reflection & won't come around.

Just DJ Says:

May 16th, 2009 at 7:25 pm

Regarding the science behind zip log bags of water? My research found that each of the millions of molecules of water presents its own prism effect and given that flies have a lot of eyes, to them it's like a zillion disco balls reflecting light, colors and movement in a dizzying manner. When you figure that flies are basically prey for many other bugs, animals, birds, etc., they simply won't take the risk of being around that much perceived action. I moved to a rural area and thought these "hillbillies" were just yanking my city boy chain but I tried it, worked immediately! We went from hundreds of flies to seeing the occasional one, but he don't hang around long.