

KEEPING PLANTS SAFE FROM PESTS AND DISEASES

Keep the garden clean

It is important to remove pest and disease sources to reduce their presence. Remove dead, diseased and pest-infested plants, and prune away dead and unhealthy branches. After pruning, disinfect the tools in a 5% bleach solution.

Maintain plant health

Healthy plants are usually able to resist pests and diseases better. Help plants to grow well by watering adequately and following a fertiliser regime. Also ensure that there is adequate ventilation and soil drainage to reduce excessive moisture and avoid creating conditions that may favour diseases to develop.

Grow plant varieties with strong resistance

Some plants are less prone to pests and diseases than others. Pick hardy plants and varieties for the garden, and plant a variety of plant types in the garden so that certain types of pests and diseases are less likely to spread across the garden.

Adopt a Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programme

For long-term effective pest prevention, consider using a combination of controls, including the following:

- **Encourage natural enemies of pests**
Allow natural enemies or predators of garden pests to flourish by minimising the use of pesticides. Wasps, ants, spiders, lacewings, ladybird beetles and birds are some animals that help to control pest populations.
- **Use mechanical forms of pest control**
Create physical barriers to prevent pests from entering such as planting within a netted structure, and wrapping fruits with paper or plastic (e.g. mango, starfruit and jackfruit). To help remove pests such as whiteflies, aphids and thrips, sticky traps and/or pheromone and chemical lures may also be used to trap them.

Only use pesticides or fungicides when strictly necessary

Use insecticides or fungicides only when necessary to counter severe problems with pests or plant diseases. Identify the pest or diagnose the disease so that the appropriate chemical(s) can be used to effectively counter the problem.

USING PESTICIDES AND FUNGICIDES SAFELY

Pesticides and fungicides may affect non-targeted animals or organisms in the garden. As such, insecticides or fungicides should be used only when strictly necessary to counter severe problems with pests or plant diseases.

Note: Please stop applying pesticides or fungicides at least 14 days before harvesting fruits and vegetables for consumption. Remember to wash the fruits and vegetables well before consumption.

Before spraying

- Read the instruction label carefully.
- Observe safety precautions and follow the instructions.
- Always wear gloves and use a stirring rod when mixing chemicals.
- Check equipment for any leakage before use.
- Keep children and pets away at all times.

During spraying

- Do not spray against the wind, in enclosed areas or under the hot sun.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while spraying.
- Wear appropriate protective clothing: mask, gloves, long-sleeved shirt and goggles.

After spraying

- Bathe entire body to wash off any trace of pesticide or fungicide.
- Wash equipment and clothing thoroughly.
- Dispose of empty pesticide or fungicide containers properly by thoroughly rinsing and crushing them before putting them in the trash.

Storage of pesticides and fungicides

- Label the containers clearly.
- Store the chemicals away and lock them up when not in use.
- Do not keep pesticides or fungicides in drinking containers such as milk jugs.

First aid

- Seek medical attention immediately when accidents occur.
- Bring along the container or label of the pesticide or fungicide for reference.