



# AND IF THAT DOESN'T WORK, TRY THIS!

Your Ideas For Controlling Weeds and Pests In Your Garden

## PRAYING MANTIS

I moved to North Carolina eight years ago and have enjoyed working in my flower garden. I was having a constant battle with a few garden pests.

I saw a stunning praying mantis in my garden two years ago, and I watched her every day. I noticed her eating the beetles, so I was very careful not to harm her. At the end of the summer, she made her egg case on the mock orange, and she disappeared. In the spring I had the joy of seeing hundreds of her offspring hatch and spread through the garden. So last summer there was a huge difference in the garden pests!

Last fall I counted three egg cases, so this summer not only will I have less pests, but I will enjoy watching those incredible creatures.

*Arden Yunger*

*Young Harris, Ga. | Blue Ridge Mountain EMC*

## IRISH SPRING OR DIAL

To keep deer from eating plants, I use Irish Spring or Dial soap. Both have a strong smell that deer don't like. I buy the soap in bulk and cut each bar into four parts. I put each piece of soap in a bag made of netting or an old pair of panty hose cut into 4-inch sections. I tie each bag with a twisty. I use another twisty to attach it to a stick and put it next to the flowers, bush or plant. It works!

*Conrae Fortlage*

*Youngville | Wake EMC*



## BEETLES, NEWSPAPER, WHEELBARROW

I have been gardening for many years. I was in the 4-H Club in Surry County and received a medal for gardening and a medal in entomology.

I controlled the pests in the garden with praying mantis and ladybug beetles. I didn't use sprays because the Sevin dust or spray would kill the "good" insects. To control weeds, we'd hoe the vegetables once at

about six inches high and then we'd put layers of newspapers between the rows, with a few rocks or some soil on top. The newspapers would keep the moisture in and help to control the insects on the ground—they didn't like the newspapers!

With regards to growing tomatoes, having newspapers around the vines after staking keeps moisture in the soil. It keeps the fruit clean, and it keeps black widow spiders from hiding in a damp place.

I had a total knee replacement back in the summer, and another suggestion is to plant your seeds in a wheelbarrow or in flower pots. You can see how healthy and productive the cucumber plants were (at left). The squash did well in flower pots.

Enjoy the outdoors and have fun.

*Betty Lou Wallace*

*Thurmond | Surry-Yadkin EMC*

## USED TEA BAGS

Back in the summer we had an epidemic of locust-type grasshoppers. They were everywhere by the thousands eating everything, including my shrubs and rose bushes. I tried sprays and dusts—nothing seemed to help. I thought my bushes were dead. My sister told me to put used tea bags around them. They came back out, and the blooms were incredible. Best of all, the grasshoppers went away. Also, used coffee grounds seem to run moles and voles away. I don't know how it works, but it does.

*Janice H. Sheffield*

*Ellerbe | Pee Dee EMC*



Thanks to everyone who sent in stories about controlling weeds and pests. You can see more on our Web site. Next month we'll publish your

stories of the dumbest souvenir you ever brought home.

(Deadline was Feb. 15.) For more themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series, see page 23.

## LADYBUGS

Every spring we have “The Great Ladybug Release.” I order 900 ladybugs from an organic gardening catalog. They arrive in a cloth bag inside a small box. After spraying the garden and yard with water (the ladybugs are thirsty after the long journey) we sing “The Ladybug Picnic” and open the drawstring bag (shown right). The ladybugs fly off to eat aphids and other harmful insects. We see them in the garden all summer, doing their job!

*Teresa Boykin  
Boone | Blue Ridge EMC*



## DEADLY BEER

As an avid organic gardener, my mom was always looking for ways to rid her vegetable garden of pests without using chemicals. One year she was having a hard time with slugs. She learned that the best way to rid a garden of the slimy creatures was to place dishes of beer among the plants. The slugs would be attracted to the brew, crawl in and die.

Never being the type of person to be seen with any kind of alcohol, she was slightly worried about the prospect of being seen buying it. She figured she would slip into a local convenience store in our small town, purchase her beer and hurry out. Her plan was going smoothly until a friend and member of the church came into the store just as she was placing her single beer can purchase on the checkout counter.

My mom recounts with chagrin how she explained herself by stammering, “It’s for my garden!”

The beer really did work, and her garden was slug-free.

*Jennie Eggleston  
Monroe | Union Power Cooperative*

## KEEPING THE POKEWEED

Though we pull and poison such invasive weeds as poison ivy and greenbrier, the lowly pokeweed has found a place in our gardens. Its gently arching red stems and dark green foliage add interest to the borders of our yard. Pokeweed’s white blossoms are attractive, just like the pendulous berry clusters that attract many birds. Robins and mockingbirds are especially attracted to the pokeweed berries.

We take precautions when handling the pokeweed since it contains toxins. The grandchildren know to leave it alone. The birds, however, are immune to the toxins.

*Eve Deibel  
Denver | EnergyUnited*



## NEWSPAPER, BUT NOT CHICKENS

As the time for gardening approaches I find myself wondering, is it all worth it? The garden seems to get bigger every year, and we (my husband, our 6-year-old daughter, our 2-year-old son and I) love the harvest. But the fight for the harvest is us against them—weeds, grass and the swarm of bugs that sets down on our farm every year. So a few years ago my husband and I used a method we had heard of before: newspaper.

Yes, your old newspaper spread under and around your plants will keep grass and weeds from growing, as long as you put down maybe four or five layers and cover it with old hay or pine straw or some other mulch. Wow!

Now for the swarm of leaf eaters. We have tried sprays and dusts. They work for a while but you have to keep applying them over the summer. The chickens on our farm love bugs, so I tried to put them out in the garden to try the natural way. In turn they pecked all the tomatoes, ate some of them, scratched up the lettuce and ate beans right off the vine. So much for organic. Liquid Sevin has been our best insect killer yet.

*Beth Tyner  
Hollister | Halifax EMC*

## Send us your best **Earn \$50**

Here are the themes in our “Nothing Could Be Finer” series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we’ll send you \$50. You don’t have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

### May 2007 How We Saved Energy

Good ideas for home, at work, or on the road.

*Deadline: March 15*

### June 2007 One Time at Summer Camp

Your best summer camp story. Send photos, if you have any.

*Deadline: April 15*

### July 2007 Before Farmers Markets

Your stories of buying and selling farm products in the old days.

*Deadline: May 15*

### August 2007 The Class Prank

What’s the best one you ever heard?

*Deadline: June 15*

### The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can’t pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don’t agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616  
Or by e-mail: [finer@carolinacountry.com](mailto:finer@carolinacountry.com)  
Or through the Web: [www.carolinacountry.com](http://www.carolinacountry.com)



## ROLL UP SLEEVES AND PLUCK

Growing up on a farm in southeastern North Carolina certainly taught me to deal effectively with pests and weeds in the garden. My dad, Mr. Walter Lee Hill, was one of the finest farmers in the area. He took as much pride in the garden as he did the other crops. He had a surefire cure for pests and weeds in the garden, which I still use today.

We had to get in there and grub with our hands. Dad didn't believe much in using chemicals such as dusting unless absolutely necessary. At the first sight of any pest or the tiniest weed, we had to be right there to pluck them. They never took over our garden because Dad kept us in there almost daily purging them.

As I said, this method still works for me today. I keep the pests and weeds out of my garden by rolling up my sleeves and plucking away on an almost daily basis.

*Wanda Hill Simmons  
Havelock / Carteret-Craven EC*

## REFLECTIVE, HANGING CDs

I found a great use for those pesky CDs that come in the mail to try and sell Internet services, but any CD or DVD will work.

Drive a stick at each end of your bean row or other vegetables that you want to protect from deer. Stretch a string between the sticks along the garden's edge so that it is about four feet off the ground. Stretch it tight. Then run another string through the hole on a CD, and hang it from the stretched string so that it hangs down about two to three feet above the vegetables. Hang several about three or four feet apart along the stretched string.

Even the slightest breeze will cause them to spin and wave. They catch the sunlight and reflect even light from the moon or security lights at night. I have used this idea for several years now after losing crop after crop of beans to the deer. I haven't had a deer problem since. Come to think of it, rabbits haven't bothered anything either! And it doesn't cost anything!

*Edwina May  
Boone / Blue Ridge Electric*



## CHILD LABOR

When I was growing up on the farm in the 30s and 40s, there were 12 children in our family. My mother believed in organic farming way back then. She would not allow my father to put any kind of poisoning on our farm. To get the children out of the house, she would get each of us a Mason jar with a lid and make us go out to pick potato bugs off the potato bushes. If any of us did not have many bugs, she assumed we did not pick them clean, so we had to go pick our rows over again.

When our cotton bushes began to have squares on them, she would make us get a peck bucket and go up one side of the hill of cotton and down the other side and pick up all the squares that had fallen off. These squares had boll weevils in them. We had to burn them. This helped make a better crop of cotton per acre. This is how we did organic farming.

*Geranium Tew Lugo  
Roseboro / South River EMC*

## HAND-PICKING, NEWSPAPER AND CHLOROX

I am 83 years old, and I enjoy working in my garden. I use a hoe and a push plow. When I was a child I always helped my mother with her garden. In 1936 and 1937 my mother had some nice collards. I would help her pick the bugs off her collards each day, and we would kill them by hand. She

didn't have money to buy poison. She had collards that made a head like cabbage. Her garden was always free of weeds. We used a hoe, and in the spring my dad would plow the garden plot up with the mule. We had a fence around it to keep the chickens out, as they could be pests.

Now I can afford to buy poison for my garden.

In the fall, I put several layers of old wet newspapers on the area where I will plant my garden the next year. The weeds do not come up through them and later they rot and become fertilizer. I spray poison oak with Chlorox.

I inherited a love of gardening from my mother, and I also learned to be frugal and to use what I have.

*Monnie Sullivan  
Lillington / South River EMC*