

Different insects and small animals live in our gardens.

Most cause no harm or are beneficial and are best ignored, such as many spiders and ants. Others may cause problems. For example, slugs and snails can go unnoticed until there is extensive leaf damage.

Slugs and snails

These are soft and slimy molluscs (picture below). Only snails have a protective external shell. Both live at ground level and can damage seedlings and plant leaves.



Slugs and snails are important decomposers of organic matter. They require moisture and a supply of food. They eat organic debris and plant parts, mostly at night. They shelter in moist places. Slug feeding is highest during cool damp nights and sunny warm days. Damage is recognized by irregular holes with smooth edges, especially on young leaves (picture to right). When seen, handpick and discard them.

Capture slugs with a trap filled with beer. These homemade traps are very effective. Slugs attracted to the liquid fall in the container and drown. Use a container 15 cm deep. Place in the ground so the top is levelled with the surface. Fill with beer up to 3 centimetres from the top.



Use a commercial bait for large infestations. Select a product containing the least-toxic pesticide ferric phosphate. Place the bait under a board or shingle to increase residual life. Follow label instructions.

Spiders

Spiders are important predators in the garden. No control is necessary for most spiders. Use a broom or vacuum to remove spider webs found in undesirable places.

Aim to prevent the entry of spiders into the house. Install weatherstrip paper at the base of doors and windows. Where ants

enter a building, remove clothing and toys from the floor.



Some spiders may bite when disrupted. Exercise caution near black widow spiders. Females are shiny black with a red hourglass shape design on the abdomen (picture above). They prefer dry, undisturbed places in the pathway of prey insects.

Ants

Different species of ants are common in the region. Most ants commonly found in gardens are seldom a problem. However, populations can explode when nesting sites are located near buildings. Termites and carpenter ants will chew into structural wood.

Removing the ants and prevent their access. Remove food spills where ants are foraging. Vacuum ants found inside a building. Inspect the outside building foundation for small holes where ants enter. Seal or cover the openings.

For a severe problem, apply a bait or dust. Select a product containing the least-toxic pesticide silicon dioxide. Follow label instructions. Use outdoors only. Prevent access by children and animals.

Rodents

Various rodents are found in the Okanagan. The house mouse has a small, slender body with pointed ears and a long tail. The field vole, common near weeds, is small and stocky with rounded ears and a short tail. The Deer mouse, which lives in forested areas, is recognized by its white underbelly. The black rat is large and sleek and may be found in building ceilings.

Community & Media Relations

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Rodents live where there is food and water. Store food in tight fitting containers. Ensure garbage cans have a tight fitting cover and elevate them above the ground. Around water pipes and vents, screen openings larger than 0.5 cm. Seal openings larger than 7.5 cm with steel wool, metal or mortar.

Trapping is an effective control method. Live traps can capture many mice at once. Check daily. Install snap traps where rodents are active. Handle with gloves to avoid leaving a human smell. Bait with a peanut, dried raisin or a piece of hot dog. Place along the wall with the bait closest to the wall. Use many traps spaced 0.5 to 1 meter apart.

Seek help for severe rodent problems. House mice and rats that live inside buildings may carry pathogens of human diseases. For the best course of action, consult with a garden center or a certified pesticide applicator.

Yellowjackets & Other Wasps

Paper wasps, solitary wasps, bees and hornets are usually not aggressive towards humans. Yellowjackets can be a nuisance around picnic tables in late summer.

Minimize yellowjacket encounters. Clean food spills and ensure lids are fitted on garbage containers. Do not smash yellowjackets as the scent will cause other yellowjackets to attack. In late summer, install traps with lures (picture below).

Place the trap in a freezer for one day to kill the captured wasps.

For a severe problem, spray the nest with an aerosol. Select a product containing the least-toxic pesticide pyrethrin. Follow label instructions. Use outdoors only. Wear protective clothing to prevent being stung by wasps. Apply during the evening when wasp activity is reduced.

Kelowna's Pesticide Regulation Bylaw No. 9920

The City of Kelowna's Pesticide Bylaw, passed in January 2009, regulates the use of pesticides for non-essential (cosmetic) purposes.

Pesticides are products used to control unwanted weeds, fungi and insects. Under the Pesticide Bylaw, most pesticides cannot be applied on a residential property.

Least-toxic pesticides on the "excluded list" are exempt from the restrictions of the Bylaw. Certified pesticide applicators are also exempt from the restrictions of the bylaw.

To view the entire bylaw and pesticides on the "excluded list", refer to kelowna.ca/environment, under Pesticide Free.

