

# Welcome to the Tuesday Tree Huggin' Tip!

## Tip 25: Find Ways to Deter Pest Naturally

Inspired by Green Leaders Dominique Danielle and Dana Coleman, I went and looked up some ideas for getting rid of unwanted critters naturally and safely. Here's what I found out: the best way to get rid of pests naturally is to **prevent them from entering your space in the first place!** Here are some of the natural deterrents that you can incorporate in your landscaping to keep bugs and other vermin out of your home and away from our TDG apartments:

1. Thin dense vegetation to make the habitat less desirable to rodents and other vermin. Climbing hedges such as Algerian or English ivy, star jasmine, and honeysuckle on fences or buildings are very conducive to roof rat infestations and should be thinned or removed if possible, as should overhanging tree limbs within 3 feet of the roof. Separate the canopy of densely growing plants such as pyracantha and juniper from each other and from buildings by a distance of 2 feet or more to make it more difficult for rats to move between them.
2. Plant perennials such as catnip, chives, lavender, Thai lemongrass, geraniums, and rosemary in your landscaping – these plants repel bad bugs.
3. Mint can be planted near the foundation of buildings to deter all kinds of pest including ants and cockroaches.
4. Include marigolds and basil in your annual plantings to repel insects including mosquitoes, ants and aphids.
5. The Mosquito Plant, or *Citrosa Geranium*, can be grown on patios for its mosquito-repelling qualities.

Inside your home, practice these housekeeping items diligently to prevent a pest invasion:

1. Get rid of any standing water, damp areas or water-damaged material—they all attract insects.
2. Fix leaky plumbing (good for water conservation too!). Don't leave water in plates under your houseplants, under your refrigerator or anywhere overnight.
3. Don't inadvertently feed pests! Clean areas where food is stored, prepared or eaten. Don't leave dirty dishes or pet food out for very long.

4. Store opened food items in tightly closed glass containers which will deter insects from chewing through boxes or bags.
5. Put food scraps and trash in a tightly covered garbage or composting can, and take out the trash frequently.
6. Remove or block their hiding places. Caulk cracks and crevices to block access to your home.
7. Caulk and seal openings in walls, use weather stripping on doors and windows, and use screens on floor drains, windows and doors.
8. Don't store newspapers, paper bags, and boxes for long periods of time—they make great insect homes. Also check for insects in packages or boxes before bringing them into your home.
9. Vacuum regularly, especially under your appliances.
10. Keep exterior spaces clean to deter flies: Clean up pet litter, and tightly close all garbage cans.
11. For fleas, bathe your pets regularly. Wash mats, beds or surfaces that they lay on and vacuum your house weekly or more.
12. Cedar oil is a natural, non-toxic insect repellent. It can be used to repel mosquitoes, fleas, ants, cockroaches and other insects. It's safe for your skin and even has a pleasant smell. Pets and pet bedding can also be treated with cedar oil to control fleas. Citronella oil is another natural mosquito repellent and is often used in outdoor candles.

Next week, we will discuss ways to eliminate the pests that may make it past your deterrents.

*Yours in crunchiness,*

*Angelique*

Angelique Wheelock  
Greening Program Coordinator  
The Donaldson Group  
15245 Shady Grove Road, Suite 160  
Rockville, MD 20850  
[awheelock@thedonaldsongroup.com](mailto:awheelock@thedonaldsongroup.com)  
<http://www.thedonaldsongroup.com>  
Phone 301-251-8980, ext. 117  
Fax 301-251-8940