

Article for Garden Myths Partner Program

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Title:

Garden Myth: Do Eggshells Stop Slugs?

Slugs can be a real problem in the garden and many home remedies have been suggested to control them. One of the most common is eggshells. Spread the crushed eggshells around your plants and slugs will not cross the barrier because the sharp edge on the shells cut their bodies. This sounds like a good organic solution to the slug problem, but does it work?

Simple to Test for Yourself

Testing this theory is very easy to do. Get some eggshells and let them dry. Then crush them into various size pieces. Most people suggest that small pieces work better than large ones since small pieces produce more sharp edges.

Take a tray or plastic container and make a ring of shells in the center as shown in the picture for testing Diatomaceous Earth. Place some slugs or snails in the center of the ring and wait to see what happens. If this method of slug control works, they will stay inside the ring. If eggshells don't work they will escape.

When I did this experiment, the slugs took off and crossed the eggshells without any hesitation. The idea that eggshells stop slugs is a complete myth.

What Does Work?

For the most part, home remedies do not work well for controlling slugs. But you can try to use nature to control slugs.

Slugs prefer to eat dead vegetation, not your plants. Don't clean up your garden as much so slugs find food on the ground and don't need to climb plants to get a meal.

Mulch on the ground keeps moisture in the soil which slugs like. But it also makes a great home for predators like beetles which feed on slugs and slug eggs. Litter left on the ground cultivates a biodiverse mixture of animals that control slug populations.

Encourage snakes and toads in the garden by providing places for them to hibernate. They love escargot.

If none of this works for you try a slug bait containing iron phosphate. It is considered organic, and less harmful to animals than metaldehyde baits. Contrary to popular belief, iron phosphate can harm dogs

and the more common chelated form of iron phosphate is harmful to the environment since it contains EDTA.



Ring of Diatomaceous Earth used to test how snails react to it, by Robert Pavlis

Written by Robert Pavlis, author of two books, , [Garden Myths](#) and [Building Natural Ponds](#).

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Written by Robert Pavlis, author of two books, , [Garden Myths](#) and [Building Natural Ponds](#).