



DIATOMACEOUS EARTH

An effective pesticide against a wide variety of garden pests, including aphids, thrips, ants, mites, earwigs, snails and slugs.

Diatomaceous earth (**DE**) is a dust made of the fossilized remains of single-celled plants called diatoms. Although contact with the dust poses no risk to people, it is deadly to animals with exoskeletons. The microscopic fossils have razor-sharp edges that scratch the outer shell of insects, causing insects to dehydrate and die. Food-grade **DE** does not contain toxins or chemicals, but it is an effective pesticide against a wide variety of garden pests including aphids, white fly, beetle grubs, ants and mites.

Application — Dry Method

- Fill a shaker container with **DE**. Avoid creating dust by using a spoon to transfer the dust to the container. Although **DE** is non-toxic, you should not breathe the fine dust. Consider wearing a disposable face mask and goggles if you will be working with large quantities of the dust or if you have respiratory issues.
- Shake the dust on to the vegetable plants. The best time to do this is in early morning or late evening, when the plants are wet with dew. The moisture helps the dust to adhere to the plant. **DE** won't harm insects when it is wet, but it will be effective once it dries. Shake the dust on the vegetables as well as the leaves; the dust can be easily washed off the vegetables prior to consumption. You need to cover both the top and underside of all foliage with the dust.
- Apply the dust to the garden bed and to the area surrounding the garden. This will keep many crawling insects from even reaching the vegetable plants.
- Spread **DE** around the base of plants to deter snails and slugs.

- Spray the vegetable plants with a garden hose if it is not the time of year for morning or evening dew. Wait until the excess water drips from the plants, and then shake the dust on the damp plants.

Application — Wet Method Using A Sprayer

- Pour 4 tablespoons of **DE** into 4½ litres (1 gallon) of water in a sprayer.
- Mix well to dissolve the dust.
- Spray the plants until they are wet but not dripping. Spray the undersides of leaves, as well. This method works well for treating all parts of the plants with **DE**.
- Allow the plants to dry. The water “glues” the dust to the plants. Once the plants dry, they will have a thin, even coating of dust. This spray method also works well in windy conditions, when it would be difficult to use the shaker to dust the plants.

Warnings

- When handling and applying **DE** it is important to consider wearing a dust mask and goggles so as not to inhale too much of the dust, as the dust can irritate mucous membranes. Keep pets and children clear of the dusting area — once the dust settles it will not be a problem to either you, children or pets.
- Do not apply a heavy layer of **DE** on the leaves of vegetable plants. This can block sunlight from reaching the leaves and interfere with photosynthesis. **A thin, even layer is all that is needed.**
- Only use food-grade **DE**, not filter grade. Filter-grade **DE** may contain high levels of silica and is dangerous to inhale. Haughton Green Gardening Society only sells food-grade **DE**.