

PROTECT YOUR PLANTS FROM BUGS

“95% of bugs you see in the garden are beneficial insects. That’s why spraying broad-spectrum insecticides is such a mistake ... you are killing many more friends than enemies.”

Dan Guenthner, Organic Farmer & Farming Instructor
Osceola, WI

We’ve got some bugs in Madison community gardens. Mexican bean beetles, squash bugs, cucumber beetles, cabbage loopers, and flea beetles are out there. And many beneficial insects are there too, even though sometimes we notice them less than The Bad Guys! CAC Community Gardens is offering advice and floating row cover to help you protect your vegetables. Read on ...

Ask an organic vegetable farmer what is the single most important way that they control insects. Many will agree: floating row cover. This is a fabric, shown at right, that keeps bugs off your plants.

CAC offers this great organic insect control device at wholesale cost to community gardens in Madison. We need a volunteer at each garden to cut up and distribute the row cover at their site in the spring. Call us if you are interested.

CAC will supply mid-weight row cover, which can be used throughout the season. It also can be rolled up and put away in the fall, then used again in years to come. **Flip this page over to learn how to use your row cover.**

What Is Floating Row Cover?

“The easiest method of pest control is to prevent damage in the first place. Using a physical barrier like a floating row cover will prevent insect pests from reaching your plants and chewing them or laying their eggs on them. ... Floating row cover is a fabric made of spun polypropylene fibres. The fabric itself is very lightweight and will sit on top of your plants without causing any damage. The fabric allows both light and water to penetrate it but prevents even the smallest insects like flea beetles from getting to your plants.”

Arzeena Hamir, Organic Living Newsletter



“Floating row cover is the best tool that organic farmers have for protecting crops from insects. And it is just as effective in gardens, and completely non-toxic to humans, pets, and beneficial bugs. I suggest that gardeners handle it carefully so that they can re-use it over several years.”

Mark Geistlinger, St. Paul Garden

NON-TOXIC TO HUMANS! SAFE INSECTICIDES

RECOMMENDED FOR MADISON'S COMMUNITY GARDENS

List from Karen Delahaut, Integrated Pest Management Specialist at UW-Madison

Azadirachtin (Safer's Brand Neem)

Controls

- * Asparagus aphids
- * Bean aphids
- * Cabbage aphids

Insecticidal soap (Safer's, Concern)

Controls

- * Asparagus aphids
- * Bean aphids
- * Cabbage aphids
- * Green peach aphids
- * Melon aphids
- * Potato aphids
- * Potato leafhoppers
- * Aster leafhoppers

Bacillus thuringiensis var. tenebrionis (brand name is Bonide Colorado Potato Beetle Beater)

Controls

- * Colorado Potato Beetles on potatoes and eggplant
- * Fleabeetles

Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki (brand names are Thuricide & Dipel)

Controls

- * Cabbage loopers on cole crops (brassica family - broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, kale, mustard greens, bok choy, chinese cabbage, cabbage, etc.)
- * Imported cabbageworms on cole crops
- * Diamondback moth on cole crops
- * Corn borers & Corn earworms
- * Cutworms
- * Tomato hornworm
- * Tomato fruitworm

CAC can help you set up an organic pest control workshop at your garden taught by experts from UW – Madison.

Give us a call to schedule it:

246-4730 ext 218.

Insect Advice from Dane County Extension

Home Horticulture Help Line for Dane County Residents

Call 608-224-3721 between 9 am & 1pm, Monday - Friday. Home visitations are available in Dane County. Or email your question to a Master Gardener at homehort@co.dane.wi.us

Diagnostic Services are also available. Bring plant and insect samples to the Fen Oak offices, 8-4 pm, Monday - Friday. Please call 608-224-3721 or 224-3715 for information on how to prepare your sample.

How to Use Row Cover

Place row cover over your plants with enough slack for the plants to grow. Anchor all the edges with something heavy (dirt, boards or rebar all work well), so that the wind won't blow the row cover away and the bugs can't get in through cracks. Use large pieces if you can to cover several plants at a time or a whole row of seedlings. Put your row cover on at the same time that you plant. Whether you use seeds or seedlings, take the time **that day** to cover your plants. Otherwise, bugs will get on your plants and then if you put on row cover later you'll be trapping the bugs in instead of out. Row cover works very well to keep bugs off plants in the cabbage family (mustard greens, bokchoi, broccoli, arugula, etc). It also works like a mini-greenhouse for heat-loving plants like peppers, sweet potatoes and melons, giving them a real advantage if you put it over them when you plant them in early June. Remember that for melons, peppers, and other plants that need pollination, you need to remove the row cover when they begin to flower, or it will keep out the good guys (pollinator insects) as well as the bad guys.