



## Raptor Fact Sheet: ELIMINATE PEST INSECTS, NOT WILDLIFE!

Insects are an important part of our environment and play a critical role in the food chain. They are a source of food for many, many animals and even plants like the attractive native Rainbow Creeper (Sundew).

Many insects, however, are also pests, and when they get out of their natural environment and into our homes, they can spread disease, spoil food and harm us with their bites and stings.

Overuse of chemical pesticides has caused a number of undesirable effects, such as secondary poisoning of native animals that eat insects as well as some pests becoming resistant to insecticides. When predators such as raptors are handed in to us with secondary insecticide poisoning, it is very difficult for them to make a full recovery because insecticides attack the brain and central nervous system, which can lead to permanent brain damage. Many such patients die or have to be put to sleep to end their suffering.

Poison of any kind is always dangerous and should be used as a last resort rather than a first line of defence against pests.

So, what can we do to try and control pests without contributing to the over-use of poison? As with most pests, they will go where the food is, so keeping food sources in airtight containers and keeping the kitchen tidy are important for keeping bugs down.

We've compiled a list of alternatives that we have tried ourselves and found to be effective:

- **Portable Bug Zapper** – available from the supermarket at a cost of around \$30-\$40. Charge the battery up during the day, then leave it out in an open area at night. The blue light attracts the insects, which are killed instantly on contact. In the morning, put the zapper back on charge and sweep up the lightly toasted bugs which can then be fed to the little birds and geckos in your garden.
- **Plastic Fly Swat** – simple, effective, good exercise and extremely satisfying when contact is made. It is important not to swat too hard, or the results can be a bit messy. An art worth learning. Available from most supermarkets and hardware shops for around \$1.
- **Bay Leaves** – great in soups and stews, but cockroaches hate them. Leave a packet open on each shelf in the pantry to deter 'roaches. From the spice aisle in the supermarket at less than \$2 a packet.
- **Cedarwood Balls** – little balls of cedar infused with essential cedarwood oil smell nice and keep the silverfish away from your precious books. From homeware and gift shops. Prices vary.
- **Sticky Moth Traps** – pantry moths can be persistent, but sticky traps from the supermarket at around the \$10 mark for a pack of two will take care of these little pests. One on each shelf will get rid of the moths.
- **Midge Screen** – have you ever seen midges walk clean through the spaces in the flywire? Midge Screen starts at around \$20 a metre from the hardware shop but can save a lot of stress and annoyance when those pesky little midges stay outside rather than all over your ceiling.
- **Aromatherapy** – we've had mixed results with aromatherapy, especially in the area of bug repellent because everybody's body chemistry is different. Sometimes it works beautifully, other times, or with other people, it doesn't seem to work at all. Try it and see. At least you'll smell nice. One of our members has had good results using aromatherapy products on the dog to get rid of fleas. Prices vary, but as a general rule, you get what you pay for.

How well do these things work? Our members have tried them all out personally and found them to work. If we haven't tried it, we won't recommend it.

If you have an alternative to poisons that has worked for you, please let us know. We'll try it out, too, and if it works for us, we'll add it to our website and credit you for telling us about it.

Good luck for a pest-free home.