

Alternatives to garden chemicals

Chemical input	Your non-chemical alternative
Fertilizer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build up the soil humus/organic matter ✓ Make compost &/or biodynamic preparations ✓ Use vermicompost and vermiliquid (from worm farm) or EM Bokashi ✓ Make liquid fertilisers in drums, from dynamic accumulators (e.g. comfrey) or seaweed ✓ Crop rotation – 4 step cycle.
Pesticide (incl. insecticide)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Avoid getting pests: timing, plant healthy plants, avoid plant stress by feed & water ✓ Deter pests: plant mixed rows, polyculture not monoculture, companion planting crops (e.g. onions with carrots) ✓ Increase predators: provide habitat, shelter e.g. 'insectaries', companion planting, flowers, introduce predators (esp. in glasshouses) ✓ Be patient: the predators will build up slowly ✓ Pick off caterpillars & slugs by hand or wash off with spray of soapy water. Don't pick off ladybird larvae as they eat aphids! ✓ Spray if you must: pyrethrum, neem, molasses, soap, garlic, vermiliquid, liquid seaweed – but not on salad leaves.
Fungicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Avoid/prevent conditions in which fungi grow: ensure good garden hygiene, good ventilation and don't over-water ✓ Prune and remove or burn infected cuttings ✓ Use resistant cultivars (e.g. <i>Invicta</i> gooseberry resists mildew) ✓ Intercrop, including flowers ✓ For viruses, aim to control the agent which spreads the virus – may be insects. ✓ Spray vermiliquid (from worm farm, diluted)
Herbicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Don't leave bare soil for seeds to colonise ✓ Don't clear too much land at once ✓ Mulch/green manure/ cut and drop ✓ 'Stale seedbed' let weeds germinate & hoe in ✓ black plastic - but it restricts soil oxygen ✓ Hoe between crops or hand weed ✓ Plant closely/under-crop/companion plants ✓ Plant mature plants that will shade weeds ✓ Harvest 'weeds' for edible and medicinal use or compost them. ✓ Crop rotation ✓ Get to know weed lifecycles, stop seeding.

Remember – work with nature, not against.