

How To Kindly Coexist With Extra Small Animals, Including Uninvited House Guests

From [IDA In Defense of Animals](#)

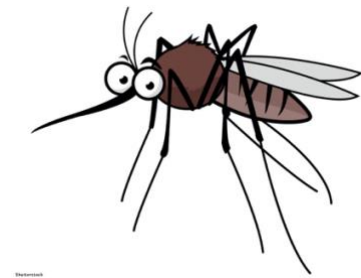
June 2023

There are so many ways to deal with insects, arachnids, and garden mollusks in an effective way that is respectful and non-harmful. When dealing with a conflict, it is important to remember to have empathy and compassion for these beings who we share a home with and who are a part of the greater ecosystem.

Warm weather is here and with it brings a myriad of insects and other small creatures like them both outdoors and in our homes. Many of us animal lovers are fans of insects, arachnids, and mollusks too, but even still, almost no one likes itchy mosquito bites, moths in their pantries, or ants traversing their kitchen counters. Not to fear! We've put together a guide on how you can compassionately coexist with these small beings, and if needed, non-lethally remove them from your home.

Deter Mosquitoes Naturally

French animal rights activist Aymeric Caron says that [mosquitoes are just mothers trying to feed their children](#). If cultivating this level of empathy still doesn't help you get over those pesky bites though, then we've got you covered. There are still plenty of methods to deter mosquitoes.



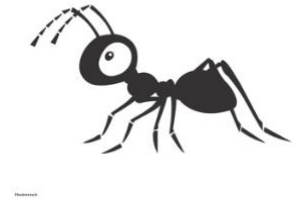
Mosquitoes do not like the scent of lavender, cinnamon, thyme, soybean oil, and lemon eucalyptus oil. You can create your own [homemade repellent](#) with these ingredients. Luckily there are many scents that mosquitoes detest. Citronella candles work to repel mosquitoes, and even carrying around a dryer sheet is said to keep them at bay. You can also burn incense, and coffee grounds, or even have a regular bonfire if it's safe in your area. For a more permanent solution, you can put plants in your garden that mosquitoes don't like, like mint, catnip, lavender, sage, rosemary, and basil.

If all else fails, there are plenty of all-natural mosquito deterrent sprays in stores – just be sure to check for harmful chemicals so that it is safe for you and your friends and family to use, and safe to use around your animal companions as well. If temperature allows, wearing long sleeves and pants will also protect against mosquitoes and other biting insects.

Remove and Repel Ants Kindly

Ants are a common unwanted household guest, and the first step in deterring them is prevention. If ants are interested in crumbs and are frequenting your kitchen the easiest thing to do is ensure that all food is put away, and anything left out is stored in an airtight container. Wipe down your counters often to ensure there are no food crumbs left out. Take care of dirty dishes right away, and take the trash out regularly.

If the ants in your house are larger, you may have carpenter ants. Despite a common belief otherwise, carpenter ants do not eat wood, but rather build their nests in wood. They consume animal companion food, meats, and sweet foods that other ants are typically interested in as well. This may mean feeding your animal companions at certain times and not leaving dog or cat food out.



Another effective method is to seal up any cracks and holes that ants may be entering your home through.

“I had a massive ant visitation event and the solution was sellotape. I followed the ant line back to find their entry points, then taped them off...and ensured every single one had left my apartment so they didn't get separated from their colony.” Fleur Dawes, Communications Director

“I also had ants on my kitchen counter. It was getting very tedious getting them on a stiff piece of paper and running them outside before they fell off. They kept coming! I found where they were getting in where the sealant between the wall and counter had become compromised. I was able to get a tube of the sealant at the hardware store and re-bead it.” Ginger Fedak, Senior Campaigner, Wild Horses & Burros

Ants also do not prefer the scents and textures of some common household items like flour, cinnamon, and vinegar. Products like these not only deter ants, but actually disrupt their pheromone trails that they use for navigating. This will prevent them from returning via the same route. It is important to mention that you should not use these products directly on ants, as that will potentially harm or kill them.

“There are numerous powders that ants will not cross. I have used baby powder and cinnamon to keep my crawling friends away — even fleas.” Doll Stanley, Senior Campaigner, Justice for Animals

Coexist with Moths Indoors and Out

We all know that moths are attracted to light, but scientists still don't fully understand why. Some theorize that moths use the moon for navigational purposes during migration, while others speculate that startled moths may fly toward the light to avoid perceived danger.



Whatever the reason, moths can be challenging when they enter your home or are attracted by your porchlight. The simplest solution is to turn out your lights altogether. If you're sitting outside, maybe try

turning that porchlight out and stargazing instead. For inside the home, catching moths and putting them back outside usually does the trick.

Gently Escort Spiders Back Outside

Stop! Before you crush that spider, you should know that he or she is as interested in continuing life as the rest of us, but is also providing you with an efficient insect control service by eating insects you have living in your home.



While spiders are actually arachnids and not insects, it is important to talk about how to coexist with them since they frequent indoor spaces. Some people choose to leave spiders in their homes because they prey on other species. If this isn't an option for you, you can easily move or relocate spiders outside. It is important to note, however, that certain species of house spider are adapted to survive inside and may not make it through the winter.

*"I used to use the glass and stiff paper method for removing insects I could trap in a glass against a flat surface. Now I use a critter catcher. They work really well for spiders and other crawlers and sometimes I can even catch a fly on a window. I love my **critter catcher** and even bought them for my grandkids."* Ginger Fedak, Senior Campaigner, Wild Horses & Burros

Help Wasps Help the Environment

Like spiders, wasps are actually valuable predators who keep other insect populations at bay. They can also be beneficial to your garden by consuming unwanted insects and pollinating! This is an important reminder that in addition to being individuals, all beings play an important role in the greater ecosystem as well.



"My last home had recessed lights all around the roof of the wrap-around porch. Wasps loved them and nested in them. They never attacked my dogs or me. They actually kept other insects away and wrens fed from their larvae." Doll Stanley, Senior Campaigner, Justice for Animals

If you feel that the wasp nest is in a place where it may be a danger to yourself, or you have young kids or animal companions you are worried about, there are several ways to remove wasp nests and discourage these insects from returning. Waiting until winter is an excellent way to move the nest that causes the least harm and stress. The worker wasps all die off naturally, and the nest will be safe to relocate. Another tactic some people use, but we don't really advise is to stand far away and lightly spray the nest with a hose on a very gentle setting, but this may harm the wasps and cause them to become agitated. If you're brave and not allergic to wasp stings, you could also try removing the nest at night while the wasps are asleep by taking the nest down and placing it in a plastic container with a lid. Relocate the nest to a place of your choosing and then open the lid after waiting for about an hour.

There are plenty of other ways to **deter wasps**. You can place sugary drinks and snacks which they tend to like away from areas that you spend time in to divert wasps while you are outside. Wasps, like other animals, including humans and insects, detest certain smells, so using peppermint, clove, lemongrass, and geranium oils will keep wasps away as well.

Slide Snails Gently

Many gardeners aren't fans of snails, but did you know they can be beneficial for your garden? Snails are another insect imposter and are in the mollusk family. They primarily consume decomposing vegetation like dead leaves, which helps break down these materials into nutrients for the soil. They also burrow underground on very hot days, creating aeration that helps improve soil health as well!



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Snails typically live from 2-5 years in the wild, but some species can live as long as 15 years! You can ensure that these animals have a long life by handling them properly. If you need to move a snail, it is important that you do not pull on the snail by picking them up by the shell. When you pull on a snail's shell, you may tear the membrane that connects their body to the shell, causing them to eventually die. To properly relocate a snail, try gently scooting them along, or tap on their shell so that they retreat inside. Then you can lift the snail, as long as there is no resistance!



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Final Takeaways

There are so many ways to deal with insects, arachnids, and garden mollusks in an effective way that is respectful and non-harmful. When dealing with a conflict, it is important to remember to have empathy and compassion for these beings who we share a home with and who are a part of the greater ecosystem, just like we are.

“One of the biggest takeaways I’ve learned from combatting insect issues is prevention, prevention, prevention. Put your food away, seal up any cracks, and make sure your home isn’t a space that is enticing for insects. When in doubt, I always keep my bug cup on hand!” Katie Nolan, General Campaigner

Do you have any tips on how to coexist with insects or want to share your story? Reach out to us at insects@idausa.org.