

## **Pests Guide:**

# **Common Garden Pests in Australian Gardens & How to Manage Them Naturally and Effectively**



## Introduction

Australia's climate supports lush and diverse gardens, but it also attracts a wide range of garden pests. Whether you're growing ornamentals, edibles, or native plants, understanding how to identify, manage, and prevent pests is crucial for maintaining plant health and garden beauty.

This guide covers the most common garden pests in Australian backyards, the damage they cause, and how to control them using both organic methods and recommended products. We've also included plant types most commonly affected and practical prevention tips that align with sustainable gardening principles.

## CONTENTS

<b>1. Aphids</b>	3
<b>2. Scale Insects</b>	4
<b>3. Mealybugs</b>	5
<b>4. Caterpillars</b>	6
<b>5. Snails and Slugs</b>	7
<b>6. Whiteflies</b>	8
<b>7. Two-Spotted Mites (Spider Mites)</b>	9
<b>8. Thrips</b>	10
<b>9. Psyllids</b>	11
<b>10. Curl Grubs</b>	12
<b>Solution &amp; Prevention Tips</b>	13



Source: <https://www.yates.com.au/garden-hub/aphids/>

## 1. Aphids

**Description:** Tiny green, black, or white sap-sucking insects that cluster on new growth and underside of leaves.

**Commonly Affected Plants:** Roses, beans, tomatoes, citrus, ornamentals

**Damage:** Aphids feed on plant juices, which leads to distorted growth, curling leaves, and yellowing. They also secrete a sticky substance called honeydew that attracts ants and encourages sooty mold, a black fungus that coats leaves and hinders photosynthesis.

### Organic Control:

- Spray plants with insecticidal soap or neem oil weekly until infestation clears
- Introduce beneficial insects like ladybugs and lacewings that prey on aphids
- Dislodge clusters using a strong water jet from a hose

**Recommended Product:** Eco-Oil – a certified organic solution that disrupts insect feeding and egg-laying.



Source: <https://www.yates.com.au/garden-hub/scale-insects/>

## 2. Scale Insects

**Description:** Small, immobile insects with a waxy or hard shell that attach to stems and leaves.

**Commonly Affected Plants:** Citrus, gardenias, lilly pilly, olive trees, indoor plants

**Damage:** Scale insects suck sap, causing yellowing leaves, stunted growth, and branch dieback. They often go unnoticed until honeydew and sooty mold appear.

### Organic Control:

- Cut and dispose of heavily infested branches
- Apply white oil or horticultural oil during cooler times of the day to suffocate the pests
- Encourage parasitic wasps which naturally keep populations down

**Recommended Product:** Eco-Oil or PestOil – both suffocate scale insects without harming beneficials.



Source: <https://www.yates.com.au/garden-hub/mealy-bug/>

### 3. Mealybugs

**Description:** White, soft-bodied insects covered in a powdery wax that cluster in leaf axils and plant joints.

**Commonly Affected Plants:** Hibiscus, indoor plants, succulents, citrus

**Damage:** Mealybugs weaken plants by feeding on sap and excreting honeydew. They are particularly troublesome on houseplants and greenhouse crops.

**Organic Control:**

- Dab mealybugs with a cotton bud soaked in rubbing alcohol
- Use neem oil or insecticidal soap for broader infestations
- Introduce predatory lady beetles and parasitic wasps

**Recommended Product:** Eco-Neem – effective against both insects and their larvae.





Source: <https://www.yates.com.au/garden-hub/caterpillars/>

## 4. Caterpillars

**Description:** The larval stage of butterflies and moths. Caterpillars chew through leaves and can defoliate plants quickly.

**Commonly Affected Plants:** Cabbages, broccoli, tomatoes, leafy greens, citrus

**Damage:** Caterpillars eat foliage, stems, and sometimes fruit. Damage ranges from holes in leaves to complete defoliation.

### Organic Control:

- Manually remove caterpillars in the early morning
- Spray affected plants with *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), a soil bacteria safe for humans and pets
- Use fine netting to prevent moths from laying eggs on crops

**Recommended Product:** Success Ultra – a natural insecticide derived from soil bacteria. Or Yates Advanced Garden Insect Killer



Source: <https://www.yates.co.nz/problem-solver/pests/whiteflies/>

## 5. Snails and Slugs

**Description:** Nocturnal mollusks that thrive in moist, shady environments. They leave slime trails and chew large holes in leaves.

**Commonly Affected Plants:** Lettuce, hostas, strawberries, marigolds, seedlings

**Damage:** Snails and slugs feed on soft foliage, flowers, and new growth, causing irregular holes and sometimes total destruction of young plants.

### Organic Control:

- Set beer traps at ground level to lure and drown slugs
- Scatter crushed eggshells or use copper tape as a barrier around garden beds
- Hand-pick during wet evenings or early mornings

**Recommended Product:** Multiguard Snail & Slug Killer – iron-based and safe for children and pets or Yates Snail And Slug Bait



Source: <https://www.yates.co.nz/problem-solver/pests/whiteflies/>

## 6. Whiteflies

**Description:** Tiny white-winged insects that flutter up in clouds when disturbed. They live and breed on the underside of leaves.

**Commonly Affected Plants:** Tomatoes, beans, fuchsias, eggplant, cucurbits

**Damage:** Whiteflies weaken plants by sucking sap and secreting honeydew, which leads to fungal growth. Heavy infestations can result in leaf drop and poor yields.

### Organic Control:

- Hang yellow sticky traps near affected plants
- Spray with neem oil or insecticidal soap weekly
- Release hoverflies and parasitic wasps for natural control

**Recommended Product:** Eco-Neem – disrupts insect hormone systems.





Source: <https://www.yates.com.au/garden-hub/mites/>

## 7. Two-Spotted Mites (Spider Mites)

**Description:** Very small arachnids that feed on the underside of leaves. They thrive in hot, dry conditions and spin fine webs.

**Commonly Affected Plants:** Tomatoes, beans, strawberries, roses, indoor plants

**Damage:** Feeding causes stippling, yellowing, and leaf bronzing. Severe infestations lead to webbing and leaf drop.

### Organic Control:

- Spray undersides of leaves with water to reduce populations
- Use neem oil or horticultural oil sprays
- Introduce predatory mites to control outbreaks

### Recommended Product:

- Mite-Rid or Eco-Oil
- All ornamentals and edibles: Yates Nature's Way Vegie & Herb Spray, Yates Nature's Way Citrus & Ornamental Spray or Yates Lime Sulfur
- Roses and ornamentals only: Yates Mavrik
- Citrus, shrubs and ornamentals: Yates White Oil or Yates Pest Oil
- Citrus only: Yates Scale Gun



Source: <https://www.yates.com.au/garden-hub/thrips/>

## 8. Thrips

**Description:** Tiny, fast-moving insects with fringed wings. Thrips feed by rasping plant tissue and sucking up the sap.

**Commonly Affected Plants:** Roses, onions, beans, cucumbers, gladiolus

**Damage:** Thrips leave silvery or bronzed streaks on leaves, and flowers become distorted or fail to open. They can also spread plant viruses.

### Organic Control:

- Use sticky blue or yellow traps
- Spray neem oil or insecticidal soap on affected areas
- Practice good garden hygiene to prevent build-up

**Recommended Product:** Eco-Neem or Yates Nature's Way Vegie And Herb Pest Spray



Source: <https://www.yates.com.au/garden-hub/psyllids/>

## 9. Psyllids

**Description:** Small sap-feeding insects that jump when disturbed. Often found on native and exotic trees and shrubs.

**Commonly Affected Plants:** Lilly pilly, citrus, tomatoes, eucalyptus

**Damage:** Psyllids cause pitting, galls, distorted new growth, and leaf yellowing. Severe infestations can stunt plant development.

### Control:

- Keep your trees healthy by watering them consistently and using a quality organic fertiliser to reduce the risk of pest infestations.
- Psyllids often attract ants due to the sweet honeydew they produce. These ants can deter beneficial predators. To prevent this, apply a sticky horticultural barrier around the trunk to stop ants from climbing.
- Consider pruning affected branches and boosting tree health with proper feeding and watering.
- Always inspect plants carefully before purchasing from nurseries to avoid bringing pests into your garden.
- Choose plant varieties that are naturally more resistant to psyllids, such as *Acmena smithii* or *Syzygium luehmannii* for Lilly Pilly.

**Recommended Product:** Eco-Neem





Source: <https://www.yates.com.au/garden-hub/psyllids/>

## 10. Curl Grubs

**Description:** White, C-shaped larvae of scarab beetles, found in soil or compost. They feed on plant roots.

**Commonly Affected Plants:** Lawns, veggie patches, potted plants

**Damage:** Patchy lawn growth, wilting, poor root development, and sudden plant death

### Organic Control:

- Turn over soil to expose grubs to birds and natural predators
- Apply beneficial nematodes to infected soil
- Use compost teas to improve soil microbiology and deter pests

**Recommended Product:** Eco-Grub – a biological control agent that targets root-eating larvae & Yates Grub Kill & Protect for Lawns





## **Solution & Prevention Tips**

Maintaining a pest-free garden in Australia doesn't require harsh chemicals. Consistent monitoring, encouraging natural predators, and improving garden health are the best long-term strategies. Here's what else you can do:

- Inspect plants weekly for early signs of infestation
- Keep plants well-spaced and properly pruned for airflow
- Use organic mulch and compost to enrich soil
- Rotate crops and avoid monocultures
- Grow pest-repellent companion plants like marigold, nasturtium, or basil

## **Still Need Help?**

**[Garden Managers](#) can assist with pest monitoring, organic treatments, and complete garden management. Contact us today to book a pest inspection and treatment.**