

# INTRODUCTION



As you can probably imagine, I get asked a lot of questions as I talk to folks from all around this great land of ours. And do you know what? The vast majority of those people's puzzling predicaments have to do with pesky pests—whether it's raccoons robbing the corn, slugs making a slimy mess of the flower beds, or some mysterious midnight marauder munching on every morsel in sight. Well, my friends, in these pages, you'll find answers to those critter concerns and a whole lot more!

We'll start off with the louts who lust after your lovely landscape. In the first three chapters, I'll reveal my tried-and-true tactics for battling the bad guys who trash your turf grass, terrorize your trees, and turn your showy shrubs into a hole-y shame. We'll also cover a couple of vile villains who don't care beans about your plants—they're out gunnin' for you! I'm talking about mosquitoes and fire ants, and I'll clue you in on my sure-fire strategies for putting them exactly where they belong: 6 feet under on Boot Hill!

Chapter 4 is just for show: your big, fat flower show, that is! Here, you'll find techniques that are guaranteed to protect your annuals, perennials, and bulbs from pests, both big and small. I'll share my super-simple secrets for saying sayonara to everything from all-but-

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invisible nematodes to big, beautiful (but bothersome) deer, and every size critter in between.

It's sad, but true, that more bad bugs target vegetables than any other kind of plant. Fortunately, though, I know plenty of ways to ensure that your harvest winds up in your kitchen, and not in the tummies of a bunch of greedy gluttons! Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are chock-full of my tips, tricks, and tonics that will put an end to your vegetable-villain vexations—including potent pest killers that are safe and super easy-to-use!

Of course, not all of the critters who make mischief in your yard are bad guys. In fact, some of them are your best pals (or maybe the pets of your friendly, but misguided neighbors). Still, that doesn't give them the right to dig up your lawn, flatten your flowers, or leave fragrant souvenirs anyplace they please! Well, take heart: Wherever Fido or Fluffy is frolicking, I'll tell you how to say, loud and clear, "Not here, my dear!" (See Chapter 1 for the lowdown on dogs, and Chapter 4 to keep cats from cuttin' their capers in your corners.)

Finally, in Chapter 8, we'll look at nine superstars who would love to join your army to fight the battle of the bugs. You'll learn all about recruitment strategies and enlistment bonuses for bats, birds, toads, and a half-dozen good-guy bugs who polish off more pesky pests than you can shake a draft card at. Then, once your fierce fighters are on board, all you have to do is sit back and cheer as they march on to victory!

So without further ado, let the battle begin!