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## Reducing Chemical Use Through Organic Gardening

**H**ome gardeners who want healthy lawns, beautiful flowers, and delicious vegetables may think they need to use the latest herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers. However, these goals can be reached without using large quantities of potentially harmful chemicals. For more information on these topics, consult the bibliography on page 6 of this booklet or contact your local Penn State Cooperative Extension Office.

### Composting:

Composting is a natural process which turns organic waste such as leaves and grass clippings into a rich organic soil-like material which can be used as a soil conditioner or top dressing. Compost continuously supplies nutrients to plants and reduces the need for chemical fertilizer. For more information on home composting, contact the Lehigh County Office of Solid Waste Management at 820-2003.

### Cultural Controls:

There are a number of cultural techniques gardeners can use to control pests. For example, pest-resistant plant varieties can be selected over more vulnerable varieties. The types of plants grown in one area can be changed from season to season (crop rotation). Companion planting can be used to repel certain insect pests; for example, many gardeners plant marigolds in or near their vegetable gardens to discourage crop-damaging insects.

### Biological Controls:

Some garden pests can be controlled by encouraging populations of creatures that prey on them. For example, lady-bugs can be used to control aphids; and predatory nematodes can be applied to soils to control certain grubs. Some pest-controlling organisms can be purchased from garden supply stores or through mail order catalogs for use in home gardens.

### Integrated Pest Management:

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a strategy for minimizing the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides by using some of the techniques discussed above in combination with chemical controls. The use of chemicals using an integrated pest management approach can be greatly reduced.

610 782-3046

... A  
citizen's  
guide to

# Safer Alternatives

PEST CONTROL

for reducing  
household  
hazardous  
waste



LEHIGH COUNTY  
**RECYCLES**