

How to manage vegetable pests the organic way

Is it possible to control pests without using chemical insecticides?



Organic pest management can be effective although it requires good prevention and monitoring.



Determine pest levels through regular scouting



How to proceed

- Scout the crops (including seedlings in the nursery) regularly to identify an early presence of pests
- Look for signs like insect feeding, entrance holes in stems, chewing or rasping damage, or frass, as well as for aggregation of insects
- Inspect both sides of the leaf
- Record or capture any observations made
- Follow the same procedure each time that you scout your field
- Use traps to monitor specific pests. Check and clean the traps weekly
- Scout crops and field areas with high pest levels more frequently

Three steps to manage pests organically

1 Ensure good growing conditions



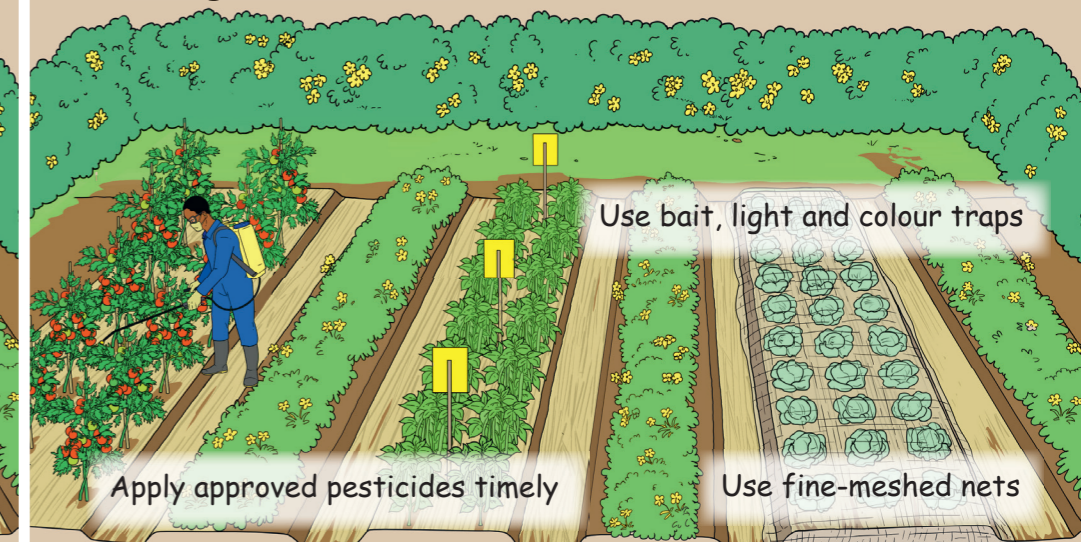
- A planned crop rotation is essential to control soil-borne pests
- A fertile soil provides the foundation for the development of strong plants
- Local varieties and cultivars may best cope with local conditions
- Use good quality seed of pest tolerant varieties from reliable sources

2 Promote natural enemies, scout for pests and maintain good field and crop hygiene



- Hedges with indigenous shrubs and selected flowering plants sown in strips or planted between the crops can host natural enemies
- Intercropping of trap crops and/or repellent plants keeps the pests away from the crops
- Regular scouting ensures timely detection of the pests

3 Control the pests with physical and approved biological methods



- Biopesticides with a narrow range of action spare the natural enemies
- Apply approved insecticides and acaricides (including plant extracts, plant oils, and mineral oil), and biological agents (including predatory insects, mites and parasitoids, viruses, and bacteria) at risk of damage
- Nematodes and other soil-borne pests can be controlled by solarisation