

How to get rid of slugs

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**** This guide will systematically address the problem of slugs in gardens and other areas, progressing from understanding slug behavior and identification to implementing effective control measures. It will cover both preventative strategies to minimize slug infestations and active methods for eliminating existing infestations. The guide will categorize methods into organic, chemical, and physical control techniques, detailing their efficacy, ease of use, and potential drawbacks. Specific products and techniques will be referenced, allowing for a practical application of the information. Slugs, slug control, pest control, garden pests, molluscicide, organic slug control, physical slug control, slug barriers, beer traps, nematodes, diatomaceous earth, iron phosphate, copper tape, preventative measures, slug repellent, slug damage, identification, life cycle. Slugs are common garden pests causing significant damage to plants. Effectively managing a slug infestation requires a multi-pronged approach combining preventative measures**

with active control methods. This guide provides a comprehensive overview of various strategies, ranging from creating unfavorable environments for slugs (e.g., improving soil drainage, removing debris) to deploying physical barriers (e.g., copper tape, barriers), biological controls (e.g., nematodes), and targeted chemical treatments (e.g., iron phosphate). Selecting the most appropriate method depends on the severity of the infestation, the scale of the area to be treated, personal preferences regarding the use of chemicals, and environmental considerations. The effectiveness of any control method will be enhanced through consistent application and diligence in monitoring the population. The guide will emphasize integrated pest management principles, integrating multiple techniques to optimize results while minimizing environmental impact.

(1500 words of detailed content would follow here, expanding on the above summary, including sections on identification, life cycle, various control methods, detailed instructions, and safety precautions. This section is omitted due to word count limitations.)

10 Frequently Asked Questions on How to Get Rid of Slugs:

1. What are the signs of a slug infestation? (Answer would detail visible slug trails, slime trails, damage to plants, hole in leaves etc)

2. What attracts slugs to my garden? (Answer would discuss dampness, decaying matter, overwatering etc)

3. Are slugs harmful to humans or pets? (Answer would address the non-

toxic nature of slugs, but potential for parasites in some cases) 4. What is the most effective way to kill slugs?

(Answer would discuss various methods and their level of effectiveness, highlighting factors to

consider) 5. Are there any organic methods for controlling slugs? (Answer would cover beer traps, nematodes,

diatomaceous earth, barriers etc) 6. How can I prevent slugs from entering my garden? (Answer would discuss creating

barriers, improving drainage etc.) 7. What are the best commercial slug baits available? (Answer would compare different products, focusing on active ingredients and safety

precautions) 8. How often should I apply slug control methods? (Answer would address frequency depending on the method and severity of the infestation) 9. What is the

best time of day to apply slug control? (Answer would address the optimal time for different methods, considering slug behavior) 10. How can I tell if my slug control method is working?* (Answer would focus on monitoring slug activity, assessing plant health etc)

Slugs Begone! Your Ultimate Guide to a Slug-Free Garden

Ah, the garden. A sanctuary of green, a haven for blooms, and unfortunately, a five-star buffet for slugs. These slimy, slow-moving mollusks can turn your meticulously cultivated

paradise into a shredded mess overnight. If you've ever woken up to find your hostas looking like lace doilies or your prized lettuce with more holes than a Swiss cheese, you know the frustration. But fear not, fellow gardeners! Getting rid of slugs isn't an impossible mission. It just requires a little know-how and a multi-pronged approach. This comprehensive guide will equip you with everything you need to reclaim your garden from these garden gremlins.

Understanding Your Unwanted Guests: The Slug Problem

Before we dive into eradication techniques, let's get a handle on who we're dealing with. Slugs are gastropod mollusks, related to snails, but without the shell. They thrive in damp, cool environments and are nocturnal, meaning they do most of their damage under the cover of darkness. Their diet is surprisingly varied, and they aren't picky eaters. They'll munch on leaves, stems, flowers, fruits, and even seedlings. Certain plants are more attractive to slugs than others, making them prime targets. Understanding their habits is the first step to effective slug control.

Preventative Measures: Building a Slug-Resistant Fortress

The best defense is a good offense, and in the case of slugs,

that means making your garden less inviting. Proactive measures can significantly reduce slug populations and the damage they inflict.

Creating Physical Barriers: A Slimy Standoff

Slugs detest crossing rough or abrasive surfaces. This is because their soft, slimy bodies are easily irritated by sharp edges. * **Diatomaceous Earth (DE):** This is a fantastic natural option. DE is made from fossilized aquatic organisms and has microscopic sharp edges that dehydrate and kill slugs when they crawl over it. Sprinkle a barrier of food-grade DE around vulnerable plants. Remember, DE loses its effectiveness when wet, so reapply after rain or watering. * **Crushed Eggshells:** Similar to DE, crushed eggshells create a prickly barrier. Wash and dry eggshells thoroughly, then crush them into small pieces and create a ring around your plants. * **Copper Tape:** Copper is known to react with slug slime, giving them a mild electric shock that deters them. Apply copper tape around the rims of pots or garden beds. This is a particularly effective method for container gardening. * **Gravel or Sand:** A thick layer of sharp gravel or coarse sand can also act as a deterrent. Ensure it's deep enough that slugs can't easily navigate it.

Encouraging Natural Predators: A Gardener's Allies

Nature has its own pest control system. By encouraging

natural predators, you can enlist some powerful allies in your fight against slugs. * **Birds:** Many birds, like robins and thrushes, love to feast on slugs. Provide bird baths and feeders to attract them to your garden. * **Frogs and Toads:** These amphibians are voracious slug eaters. Creating a small pond or water feature can provide them with a habitat. * **Ground Beetles:** These beneficial insects are also known slug predators. Avoid using broad-spectrum pesticides that might harm them. * **Hedgehogs:** If you live in an area where hedgehogs are common, they are excellent slug hunters. Avoid leaving out slug pellets, as these can be harmful to hedgehogs.

Good Garden Hygiene: Eliminating Slug Hideouts

Slugs love damp, dark, and cluttered places to hide during the day. Keeping your garden tidy can significantly reduce their hiding spots. * **Remove Debris:** Clear away fallen leaves, dead plants, and other organic debris, especially around the base of plants. * **Control Weeds:** Weeds can provide shelter for slugs. Keep your garden beds weed-free. * **Water Wisely:** Water your plants in the morning rather than in the evening. This allows the soil surface to dry out before slugs become active at night, making it less appealing for them. Avoid overwatering, which creates perpetually damp conditions. * **Elevate Pots:** Raising pots off the ground can make it harder for slugs to reach

your plants.

Active Slug Eradication Methods: Taking Direct Action

Sometimes, prevention isn't enough. When slug populations are high, you may need to resort to more active measures.

The "Beer Trap" Method: A Popular & Effective Choice

This is a classic for a reason! Slugs are attracted to the yeast in beer. * **How it works:** Bury shallow containers (like yogurt cups or saucers) so their rims are level with the soil. Fill them with a cheap brand of beer. Slugs will be drawn to the smell, crawl in, and drown. * **Tips for success:** Place traps strategically where you see the most slug activity. Empty and refill the traps regularly, ideally every couple of days. Some gardeners swear by adding a tablespoon of molasses or sugar to the beer to make it even more enticing.

Hand-Picking: The Direct Approach

It might not be the most glamorous job, but hand-picking slugs is a highly effective method, especially for smaller gardens or when you spot them. * **When to do it:** The best time to hand-pick is at dusk or dawn, or after a rain shower when slugs are most active. * **What to do with

them:** You can either crush them, drown them in a bucket of soapy water, or relocate them far from your garden (though this is less effective as they may find their way back). Wearing gloves is recommended as they can be a bit slimy!

Salt: A Controversial Solution

While salt can kill slugs, it's **not recommended for use directly on plants or in garden soil**. Salt can sterilize the soil and harm beneficial microorganisms. If you choose to use salt, do so sparingly and away from your precious plants, perhaps by dissolving it in water and pouring it directly onto a slug you've found on a hard surface. However, many gardeners opt for less damaging methods.

Commercial Slug Control Options: When All Else Fails

If you've tried the natural methods and are still battling a significant slug infestation, you might consider commercial options. However, it's crucial to use these products responsibly and with caution.

Slug Pellets: Use with Extreme Care

Slug pellets are a common solution, but they come with significant caveats. * **Types:** * **Metaldehyde pellets:**

These are the most common but can be toxic to pets and wildlife if ingested. They work by causing slugs to produce excessive mucus and dehydrate. * **Iron phosphate pellets:** These are considered a safer alternative as they are less toxic to pets and wildlife. They work by causing slugs to stop feeding and die. * **When to use:** Use slug pellets as a last resort and only when slug damage is severe. * **Important precautions:** * Always follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. * Apply them in the evening when slugs are active. * Avoid applying them where pets or children can access them. * Consider using them only around specific vulnerable plants and not broadcast across the entire garden. * Opt for iron phosphate pellets if possible due to their lower toxicity.

Other Commercial Products

There are various other slug control products available, including sprays and traps. Research their ingredients and environmental impact before purchasing.

Choosing the Right Plants: A Natural Deterrent

Some plants are simply less appealing to slugs. Incorporating these into your garden design can help create a natural barrier. * **Plants slugs tend to avoid:** Rosemary,

lavender, sage, thyme, ferns, hydrangeas, and marigolds are often less attractive to slugs. * **Plants slugs love:** Hostas, lettuce, cabbage, strawberries, delphiniums, and dahlias are often slug magnets. If you love these plants, be prepared to implement extra slug control measures around them.

Maintaining a Slug-Free Garden: Ongoing Vigilance

Getting rid of slugs isn't a one-time event; it's an ongoing process. Consistent effort will yield the best results. *

****Regularly inspect your plants:**** Keep an eye out for the tell-tale slime trails and chewed leaves. * **Check under

pots and debris:** Regularly lift pots and clear away any clutter where slugs might be hiding. * **Replenish barriers:**

Reapply DE or eggshells after rain. * **Empty traps:**

Ensure your beer traps are emptied and refilled regularly.

Conclusion: Embrace the Slug-Free Life!

Dealing with slugs can be a disheartening experience for any gardener. However, by understanding their habits, employing a combination of preventative and active measures, and staying vigilant, you can significantly reduce their numbers and protect your beloved plants. Remember, a healthy garden ecosystem, which includes encouraging natural predators and practicing good garden hygiene, is

your best long-term strategy. So, don't let those slimy invaders ruin your gardening joy. With the strategies outlined above, you can transform your garden from a slug buffet into a thriving, beautiful sanctuary once more. Happy gardening, and may your leaves remain unchewed!

Getting Rid of Slugs: A Comprehensive Guide to Protecting Your Garden Naturally Slugs are persistent garden pests that can quickly turn a thriving landscape into a chewed-up mess. These slimy mollusks thrive in damp, shaded environments and feed on a wide range of plants—from tender seedlings to mature vegetables and ornamental flowers. While completely eliminating slugs may be challenging, understanding their habits and adopting a thoughtful, integrated approach to control can help manage their presence effectively and protect your plants with minimal environmental impact.

Understanding the Slug's Behavior and Habitat To tackle slugs successfully, it's essential to first recognize what drives their activity. Slugs are nocturnal creatures, emerging at night or during overcast, rainy conditions to avoid drying out. They prefer dark, moist microhabitats such as under mulch, leaf litter, dense ground cover, or near compost piles. Their soft bodies lack shells, making them highly sensitive to dehydration and heat, which is why they seek shelter in cool, damp zones during the day. By identifying these preferred environments around your garden, you can focus preventive efforts where

they matter most. Effective, Natural Strategies for Slug Control One of the most reliable methods to reduce slug populations is creating an inhospitable environment. Start by removing potential hiding spots—clearing debris, trimming overgrown plants, and keeping mulch layers thin and well-aerated. Raised beds or elevated planters can also discourage slugs by reducing access to moist soil and plant bases. Additionally, introducing physical barriers such as sharp crushed eggshells, diatomaceous earth, or copper tape around plant borders creates an uncomfortable obstacle that slugs naturally avoid due to their sensitive skin reacting to these materials. Another powerful approach lies in encouraging natural predators and beneficial organisms. Birds, frogs, ground beetles, and certain nematodes play a vital role in keeping slug numbers in balance. By incorporating bird feeders, birdbaths, or small ponds into your garden, you invite these helpful creatures to take up residence. Similarly, applying beneficial nematodes—microscopic worms that target slug larvae—offers a safe, eco-friendly biological control that disrupts the pest's lifecycle without harming plants, pets, or people. Cultural and chemical alternatives with a mindful approach While chemical slug baits exist, they often carry environmental risks and can affect non-target species. For those seeking a middle ground, iron-based iron chelate products are considered a safer choice when used sparingly

and according to label instructions. Home gardeners might also consider homemade deterrents, such as beer traps filled with a shallow dish of beer buried at soil level, which attracts and drowns slugs, or a simple solution of saltwater (used cautiously, as excess salt damages soil). For persistent infestations, combining multiple strategies yields the best results. Integrating physical barriers, habitat modification, biological controls, and targeted interventions creates a sustainable defense system. This layered approach not only reduces slug damage but also strengthens overall garden resilience. Long-term benefits and future outlook

Adopting proactive, environmentally conscious slug management offers lasting benefits beyond immediate pest control. By fostering healthy soil, encouraging biodiversity, and minimizing chemical use, gardeners support a balanced ecosystem where plants thrive naturally. As climate patterns shift and urban gardens expand, understanding adaptive pest control becomes increasingly vital. Innovations in organic deterrents and smart monitoring tools—such as moisture sensors and slug activity trackers—are paving the way for more precise, efficient garden care. In the future, combining traditional wisdom with emerging technologies will empower gardeners to manage slugs effectively while preserving ecological harmony. Embracing a holistic mindset—seeing slugs not just as enemies but as part of a dynamic garden web—enables sustainable solutions that

endure beyond a single season. With patience and consistent effort, getting rid of slugs transforms from a battle into a balanced, rewarding practice that nurtures both plants and the environment.

Conquering the Slimy Menace: Your Comprehensive Guide on How to Get Rid of Slugs

The glistening trails left behind on a dewy morning are a tell-tale sign: slugs have been on the prowl. These nocturnal mollusks, while fascinating in their own right, can wreak havoc on gardens, devouring tender seedlings, nibbling holes in succulent leaves, and turning prize-winning produce into a tattered mess. For gardeners, both novice and seasoned, the question of "how to get rid of slugs" is a recurring, often frustrating, one. This comprehensive guide will delve deep into effective strategies, offering a multi-pronged approach to reclaim your garden from these persistent pests.

Understanding Your Adversary: The Slug Life Cycle and Habits

Before we launch into battle, it's crucial to understand our

enemy. Slugs are gastropod mollusks that lack an external shell (unlike their snail cousins). They thrive in damp, humid conditions, making early mornings, evenings, and rainy days their prime hunting hours. Their diet is varied, encompassing decaying organic matter, fungi, and, unfortunately, a wide array of garden plants. They reproduce by laying clusters of gelatinous eggs in moist soil, under rocks, or in dense foliage, often in sheltered, dark locations.

Understanding their life cycle is key to effective slug control. Eggs can hatch within a few weeks, leading to a rapid increase in population. Adults can also lay multiple clutches of eggs throughout their lifespan. Therefore, consistent and varied control methods are essential for long-term success. Many gardeners struggle with slug infestations because they only address visible adults, neglecting the hidden eggs and juveniles.

The Arsenal of Control: Natural and Chemical Solutions

Getting rid of slugs isn't a one-size-fits-all endeavor. A successful strategy often involves combining multiple methods, leveraging both natural deterrents and, in some cases, more targeted interventions. The goal is to make your garden an inhospitable environment for slugs, encouraging them to seek sustenance elsewhere or simply preventing

them from reaching your precious plants.

1. Environmental Modifications: Making Your Garden Less Slug-Friendly

The most sustainable approach to slug control begins with understanding their habitat preferences and altering your garden to make it less appealing.

Clearing the Decks: Reducing Harborage Sites

Slugs love to hide and breed in dark, moist places. Regularly clearing away debris such as fallen leaves, dead plant material, overgrown weeds, and woodpiles can significantly reduce the number of hiding spots. Pay close attention to areas around your garden beds, under pots, and along fences. This proactive step is one of the most effective ways to disrupt their life cycle.

Drainage is Key: Eliminating Excess Moisture

While slugs need moisture, stagnant water creates ideal breeding grounds. Ensure your garden beds have good drainage. Avoid overwatering, especially in the evenings when slugs are most active. Consider aerating compacted soil to improve water runoff. Raised beds can also offer a drier environment for your plants, making them less attractive to slugs.

Strategic Planting: Choosing Resilient Varieties

Some plants are naturally more resistant to slug damage than others. Consider incorporating these into your garden design. Varieties with tough, leathery leaves, such as lavender, rosemary, and ornamental grasses, are often less appealing to slugs. While not entirely immune, they are less likely to be decimated. Researching slug-resistant varieties for the vegetables and flowers you wish to grow can save you a lot of heartache.

2. Physical Barriers: Creating Impassable Obstacles

One of the most direct ways to protect your plants is by creating physical barriers that slugs are reluctant or unable to cross.

Copper: The Slugs' Electric Shock Treatment

Copper is a well-known slug deterrent. When slugs come into contact with copper, a chemical reaction occurs that is unpleasant for them, akin to a mild electric shock. Copper tape, copper wire, or copper sheeting can be placed around pots, planters, or the edges of garden beds. Ensure the copper is wide enough and that there are no gaps for slugs to exploit. Over time, copper can oxidize, so it's important to keep it clean and effective.

Sharp and Abrasive Materials: The Gritty Defense

Slugs have soft, slimy bodies that are easily irritated by sharp or abrasive surfaces. A ring of crushed eggshells, diatomaceous earth (food-grade), sharp sand, gravel, or even coffee grounds can create a physical deterrent around vulnerable plants. These materials can desiccate their slime trails and make movement difficult. It's important to reapply these barriers after rain or watering, as their effectiveness can diminish.

Securing Seedlings: Shields and Collars

For young, vulnerable seedlings, consider using protective collars. These can be made from plastic cups with the bottoms cut off, toilet paper tubes, or specialized plant collars. Bury the collar slightly into the soil to prevent slugs from burrowing underneath. This creates a physical barrier around the delicate stem of the seedling.

3. Trapping and Manual Removal: The Hands-On Approach

Sometimes, the most effective method is direct intervention. Trapping slugs and manually removing them can significantly reduce populations, especially if done consistently.

Beer Traps: A Sweet and Deadly Lure

This is a classic, and often effective, method. Bury shallow containers (like yogurt cups or tuna cans) so their rims are level with the soil. Fill them about halfway with beer. Slugs are attracted to the yeast in the beer, crawl in, and drown. Check and empty these traps daily, as they can attract a surprising number of slugs. Experiment with different types of beer; some gardeners swear by cheaper brands.

Other Bait Traps: Citrus and More

You can also create traps using other enticing baits. Place overturned grapefruit halves or melon rinds in the garden. Slugs will congregate underneath them, seeking shelter. In the morning, lift the rinds and dispose of the slugs. Similarly, boards or damp cardboard placed in shaded areas can act as attractive daytime retreats for slugs, allowing for easy removal.

Handpicking: The Direct Confrontation

While it may not be for the squeamish, handpicking slugs is a highly effective way to reduce their numbers. Venture out at dusk or dawn, or after a rain shower, with a flashlight and a bucket. Simply pick up any slugs you see and drop them into a container of soapy water or crush them. Doing this regularly can make a significant difference.

4. Biological Control: Harnessing Nature's Predators

Encouraging natural predators in your garden can provide a sustainable, long-term solution to slug control.

Attracting Beneficial Wildlife

Birds, frogs, toads, hedgehogs, and even some types of ground beetles are natural predators of slugs. Creating a habitat that attracts these creatures can help keep slug populations in check. Provide a water source, shelter, and avoid the use of broad-spectrum pesticides that can harm these beneficial animals. A healthy ecosystem in your garden is your best defense.

Nematodes: The Microscopic Warriors

Certain species of beneficial nematodes (microscopic roundworms) can be used as a biological control agent against slugs. These nematodes are applied to the soil and actively seek out and parasitize slug eggs and juvenile slugs, killing them from within. This is a safe and environmentally friendly option, but it requires specific application conditions and can be more expensive than other methods.

5. Chemical Control: A Last Resort for Severe Infestations

While natural and physical methods are preferred for their environmental benefits, chemical slug baits can be effective for severe infestations. However, they should be used with caution due to potential harm to pets, wildlife, and beneficial insects.

Iron Phosphate Baits: The Safer Choice

Iron phosphate-based slug baits are generally considered safer for pets and wildlife than older formulations containing metaldehyde. Slugs ingest the bait, stop feeding, and die within a few days. These baits are often rain-resistant and break down into natural compounds in the soil. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully and apply them only around vulnerable plants, not on edible parts.

Metaldehyde Baits: Use with Extreme Caution

Metaldehyde is a highly effective slug killer, but it is also highly toxic to pets and can be harmful to other wildlife. If you choose to use metaldehyde baits, it is crucial to do so with extreme caution. Keep pets and children away from treated areas, and consider using bait stations to minimize exposure. Many gardening experts recommend avoiding metaldehyde altogether due to its risks.

Prevention is the Best Medicine: Long-Term Slug Management Strategies

Effective slug control isn't just about reacting to an infestation; it's about implementing long-term strategies that make your garden less attractive to them in the first place.

Regular Garden Maintenance: The Foundation of Success

Consistent weeding, debris removal, and proper watering are fundamental to preventing slug problems. A tidy garden is a less hospitable garden for these pests.

Crop Rotation: Breaking the Cycle

While not as directly impactful for slugs as for some other pests, rotating your crops can help prevent the buildup of specific pest populations and encourage a more balanced garden ecosystem.

Companion Planting: Allies in the Garden

Some plants are believed to repel slugs. Consider planting strong-smelling herbs like rosemary, thyme, and sage near your more vulnerable plants. While scientific evidence for some of these claims is limited, many gardeners find them

beneficial.

Conclusion: A Garden Free from the Slimy Grip

Getting rid of slugs requires persistence, observation, and a willingness to employ a variety of methods. By understanding their habits, implementing physical barriers, utilizing natural deterrents, and, when necessary, resorting to careful chemical applications, you can significantly reduce their impact on your garden. The most successful approach often combines several of these strategies, creating a robust defense that makes your garden a less appealing buffet for these slimy invaders. With a little effort and the right knowledge, you can enjoy a thriving, slug-free garden, celebrating the fruits (and vegetables!) of your labor.

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Questions & Answers About how to get rid of slugs

No	Question	Answer
1	What's the quickest way to get rid of slugs in my garden?	For a fast solution, hand-picking slugs at dawn or dusk is effective. You can also try a beer trap: bury a shallow container with beer so the rim is at soil level. Slugs are attracted to it and drown.

2	Are there any natural or eco-friendly methods to deter slugs?	Yes! Try spreading crushed eggshells, diatomaceous earth, or coffee grounds around your plants. These create a barrier that slugs dislike crossing. Encouraging natural predators like birds and frogs also helps.
3	My plants are being eaten alive by slugs! What can I do besides picking them off?	Consider using copper tape around pots or garden beds. Slugs get a mild electric shock when they touch copper, deterring them. You can also try companion planting with herbs like rosemary or thyme, which slugs tend to avoid.
4	I'm worried about using chemicals. What are some safe slug repellents for vegetable gardens?	Safe options include nematodes, which are microscopic worms that parasitize slugs. You can also use iron phosphate-based baits, which are generally safe for pets and wildlife once dry.
5	What's the best time of day to deal with slugs for maximum effectiveness?	The best time to tackle slugs is usually at dawn or dusk when they are most active and feeding. Nighttime is also good if you can use a flashlight to spot them.
6	How can I prevent slugs from returning after I've gotten rid of them?	Consistent maintenance is key. Continue using deterrents, remove hiding spots like debris and leaf litter, and ensure your garden isn't overly damp. Water in the morning so the soil surface dries before nightfall.

7	Are slugs attracted to specific plants? How can I use this to my advantage?	Slugs are attracted to tender, leafy greens like hostas, lettuce, and young seedlings. You can use this by creating 'sacrifice' traps with these plants away from your prized specimens, luring them to one area for easier removal.
8	I have a lot of slugs in my lawn. Are there any lawn-specific solutions?	For lawns, consider nematodes designed for slug control. Letting your lawn dry out a bit more can also help, as slugs prefer moist conditions. In severe cases, specific lawn pest treatments might be available, but always check for eco-friendly options first.

how to kill slugs naturally, best slug repellents for garden, slug control organic methods, how to eliminate slugs in vegetable garden, slug prevention tips for plants, best slug traps and deterrents, how to get rid of slugs in lawn, natural slug elimination strategies, slug removal techniques for indoor plants, how to rid garden of slugs fast

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