

Luke Rosanova's Organic Pesticide



Luke Rosanova, Heather MacQueen and Joan Welch

Don't like bugs munching on your veggie plants? Don't like chemicals either?

WCU's Outdoor Classroom and Demonstration Garden doesn't use chemical pesticides, instead its gardeners rely on integrated pest management practices such as these:

- Selecting the right plants for the location based on their needs for water and sun.
- Watering plants at ground level because wet leaves are more susceptible to disease.
- Removing dead plant material because it can harbor diseases.
- Testing the soil for nutrients and minerals to identify fertilizer needs.
- Inspecting plants often to detect pest problems early.

When insects do appear, Rosanova turns to his homemade pesticide, a spicy concoction that is both budget friendly and easy to make.

To one gallon of water, add:

- 1/2 head of garlic
- 1/2 large onion (preferably not sweet, the goal of the pesticide is to repel bugs that do not like strong, spicy smells)
- 1 jalapeño or other hot pepper

This pesticide is usually ready to be put on the plants after sitting for a week, said Rosanova. Make sure to thoroughly wash harvested crops, he cautioned, otherwise they may have a spicy taste.