

January 21, 2013

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### Is your garden feeling sluggish?

Pest-ered by pests? Uninvited guests worm-ing their way into your garden? Feeling ear-itated by earwigs? Sign up for the Organic Pest Management workshop that runs Jan. 29 from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

*“Organic pest control and management involves sleuthing, studying, sometimes select spraying, and often the charming job of squishing and trapping,”* says Marla Limousin, owner and farmer at Nature’s Way Farm in the Comox Valley. *“Organic farming methods are based on naturally occurring biological processes. With a bit of understanding, you can use the natural environment to enhance plant productivity and pest resistance.”*

Observing and understanding your environment and the organisms you are dealing with – knowing your enemy! – is key. For example, a ladybug is a beneficial predator that will help keep down infestations of aphids, and the ladybug is most beneficial for pest control during the larval stages of its life cycle, when it resembles a 12 millimetre alligator. Many people would squish this bug, not knowing the benefits it brings to the garden.

Limousin will facilitate the upcoming workshop, part of the Lettuce Grow series at North Island College.

*“We’ll talk about natural predators, planting schedules and plant health, creating spaces for natural insect predators, rotating crops to confuse pests and what controls are on the Organic Materials Review Institute certified list,”* she explains.

Workshop participants will learn how to control common garden pests without the use of harmful chemical pesticides. Topics will also include the importance of healthy soil, creating habitat to attract beneficial insects and trap crops. Participants are encouraged to bring along samples or photos of pests and diseases from their fields or backyards.

Speaking of beneficial organisms, slugs are a favourite snack for chickens and ducks, currently permitted in Campbell River in zones RU-1, RU-2 and RU-3.

*“When I worked for Saanich Organics, I would arrive early to pick slugs off the cabbages, feed them to the chickens and witness their excitement. Man, did they ever love those slugs!”* says Kira DeSorcy, Lead Instructor for the Lettuce Grow Program at NIC. Desorcy notes: *“Some chickens are more interested in eating slugs than others, particularly heritage breeds, which are typically better foragers.”*

If you have any questions or comments on growing local food, please send them to [growlocal@campbellriver.ca](mailto:growlocal@campbellriver.ca). Your questions will be addressed in a future Q&A article.

To register online for Organic Pest Management or any workshop in the *Lettuce Grow* series, please visit [www.nic.bc.ca/continuingeducation](http://www.nic.bc.ca/continuingeducation) and search course codes GENI 7928-7933.

For more information on these workshops, please call Julia Peters at North Island College (250-923-9724).

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