



A62 Planning biological control



You can introduce biological control to help manage specific pest problems. These controls are natural predators delivered direct from suppliers for using outdoors or in a greenhouse/polytunnel. This activity builds on examples of biological control in section G4.11 and explains how to introduce control into your pest control plans.

Resources

- Identified pests that warrant biological control
- Suitable biological control

Activity

- 1 Monitor plants closely. If you find a pest, try to identify it. If the pest is likely to cause significant crop damage, find out whether biological control is a suitable option, using the following.
 - a A42 about diagnosing plant problems and reference books.
 - b Mail-order catalogues selling controls, eg www.organiccatalogue.com
- 2 If biological control is an option, check the following.
 - a You have the correct environment for the biological control, eg April is usually the earliest to apply slug control outdoors; 20°C is needed for red spider mite control in a greenhouse/polytunnel, etc. Check with supplier.
 - b Correct time to add control, ie before pest population gets too large, eg apply slug control three weeks before planting for best results; red spider mite control while pest population is still low, etc. Check with supplier.
- 3 Apply biological control according to supplier instructions and monitor pest population and plant health.

Top tip



Look after control

Biological controls are living creatures and need immediate attention when delivered. Check with supplier instructions, eg some should be applied without delay while others can be stored in a fridge for a few days.

Extended activity

Contact a local commercial horticultural producer and ask what biological control they use.

Health & Safety	Be careful handling biological controls, following supplier instructions for applying and managing. Ensure adult supervision when spraying. <i>See also Health and Safety Guidelines (Section SG1.2)</i>
Further information	A42 Diagnosing plant problems G4.11 Introducing biological control 'Pests, Diseases and Disorders of Garden Plants', Collins Photo Guides by Stefan Buczacki and Keith Harris. ISBN 0007196822