



The Eldergrow garden offers a therapeutic connection to nature where residents engage in meaningful ways with the garden – cognitively, socially, spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

Summary: Find and identify any pests on garden plants.

Activity Objectives:

Objective 1: Resident will engage in sensory stimulation (SS)

Objective 2: Resident will socialize (S)

Objective 3: Resident will engage cognitive skills (CS)

Supplies:

1. Yellow sticky card
2. Homemade Pest Solution: ½ cup isopropyl alcohol, 2 cups water, 1 teaspoon dish or castile soap
3. Spray Bottle
4. **Optional:** Q-tips and rubbing alcohol
5. **Talking Point Slides:** *Pests*

Set-Up:

- Move garden into central location so residents can gather around it - *don't the brakes!*
- Keep pesticide ingredients away from residents until ready to use.
- Have garden journal ready for any comments, observations.

Directions:

Step 1: Observation (You can enter any observations into your garden journal).

As residents gather, encourage residents to look at their garden.

Q: How are the plants doing? Do any look unhealthy?

Q: Does anyone see any have bugs on the plants?

Step 2: Pests:

- Indoor plants can be more susceptible to pests because they don't have natural pest predators to eat them. Thus, we must be the predators and control pests ourselves.
- Turn leaves over of a few plants, and look for white or green bugs, or thin webbing.
- Check in the crevices too, where leaves meet the stem and on flower buds.

Pest types:

Q: *Are there small white bugs that fly?*

- Tiny white bugs that fly away and are found under leaves are called **white flies**.

Q: *Are there small green or dark bugs clustered on leaves or young buds?*

- Small green or dark bugs with long legs found often in clusters are called **aphids**.

Q: *Are leaves discolored or do you see any fine webbing on the undersides or around the stem?*

- Plants with thin webbing and leaves that look sickly with yellow mottling have **spider mites**.
- When an affected leaf is tapped over a white sheet of paper, the mites fall, and appear as small specks like dust or pepper. They are usually too small to see on the plants

Q: *Do you see any small white fuzzy things on the plants?*

- Flat, white fuzzy bugs found under leaves or on stems are called **mealy bugs**.
- Use the **Pests Talking Points** slides for further identification and details about the pests.

Q: *Which pests, if any, do our plants have?*

- If none found- no need to control them.

Step 3: Spray control:

- Now that we know what pests we have, we can get rid of them!
- All of the common pests can be controlled by regular spraying with this homemade solution.
 - Mealy bugs can also be spot -controlled by dipping a Q-tip in rubbing alcohol and dabbing the bugs directly with it. The alcohol dissolves their protective coating and makes them dry out & die.
 - **NOTE:** Both sprays and rubbing alcohol are all safe for the plants and won't harm us either, but don't leave unattended.
- Ask residents to help you mix together the pest spray ingredients and pour into a spray bottle.
- Encourage a resident to help control the pests by spraying infected plants thoroughly with the homemade spray, especially targeting undersides of leaves.
- If you think you have mealy bugs, give residents pre-dipped Q-tips and keep the

rubbing alcohol away from residents.

- Conclude the activity by hanging a yellow sticky card to trap any new flying pests and help keep easy visual track of their population over time. If you start to see more pests stuck to the card, it's time to control pests again.
 - The card is VERY sticky, so have a resident help hang it but not handle it directly. Set in the back of the garden, away from leaves that will stick to it.
 - Use the included twisty tie to hang it from garden post or stick the very edge to the garden. Or, put between tines of a plastic fork to stick in soil (see below) if you find a spot in the back and away from the plants.



Step 4: Closing: Record in journal.

Q: What pests did we find & how bad were they?

Q: What did you learn today?

Q: What was your favorite part of today's activity?

