

Name _____

Herbaceous Guardians: Using Herbs to Naturally Repel Pests

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Herbs are considered effective natural repellents against insects because they contain aromatic compounds and essential oils that insects find unappealing or irritating, such as citronellal in citronella and menthol in mint. Additionally, many herbs emit strong scents that mask the odors that attract insects to plants, reducing their likelihood of infestation.
2. A simple DIY method for using herbs like lavender or mint to create homemade insect repellents is to infuse them into homemade sprays or lotions. For example, you can steep dried lavender flowers in water to create a lavender spray or blend fresh mint leaves with water and witch hazel to create a minty insect repellent spray.
3. Using herbs to repel pests offers several environmental benefits compared to chemical-based insecticides. Herbs are biodegradable and less harmful to non-target organisms like bees and butterflies, preserving biodiversity and ecosystem balance. Additionally, cultivating herb gardens promotes sustainable gardening practices and reduces reliance on synthetic pesticides that can harm beneficial insects and soil health.
4. A combination of herbs that could be planted together to create a pest-repellent garden bed includes lavender, rosemary, and basil. Lavender repels mosquitoes, flies, and moths with its aromatic scent, while rosemary deters insects like mosquitoes and fleas with its potent essential oils. Basil is effective at repelling mosquitoes and flies, making it a valuable addition to the herb garden bed. Together, these herbs create a diverse and aromatic barrier against common garden pests.

