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HOW TO GET RID OF FUNGUS GNATS IN HOUSEPLANTS SOIL

BY [AMY ANDRYCHOWICZ](#) | [175 COMMENTS](#)

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Fungus gnats (also called soil gnats) are probably the most common (and annoying) houseplant pests. The worst part about fungus gnats is that they can infest any plant that is growing in soil. You will notice these indoor plant bugs crawling out of the potting soil or flying around your plant when you water or otherwise disturb the soil. Yuck!



How To Get Rid Of
FUNGUS GNATS
In Houseplants Soil

[GetBusyGardening.com](#)



WHAT ARE FUNGUS GNATS?

Fungus gnats are tiny black flying bugs in houseplants soil. You will see them crawling around on top of the soil, or flying around your plants

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Fungus gnats live and breed in the soil. Adult gnats will lay eggs in the soil, and the larvae (tiny white worms that are barely visible to the naked eye) will feed on roots and other organic matter in the soil.

FUNGUS GNATS OR FRUIT FLIES?

Fungus gnats look similar to fruit flies, and I have seen many people mistaken a fungus gnat problem with [fruit flies](#).

Fungus gnats lay their eggs in moist soil where the larvae will hatch and feed on small roots, fungus and other organic matter in the soil. They have no interest in fruit.

If you see tiny black bugs in plant soil, and flying around your plants – those are fungus gnats.

The gnats that are flying around the fruit, or the garbage disposal in your kitchen are fruit flies.



WILL FUNGUS GNATS KILL PLANTS?

The short answer is no, fungus gnats will not kill your houseplants. Fungus gnats are mainly just a nuisance and are rarely destructive to the plant.

Sometimes they can cause root damage if the infestation is heavy, but normally fungus gnats only eat rotting roots.

Even though they aren't a huge problem for your plants, fungus gnats are likely to drive you crazy, right?! I mean, who wants gnats flying all over their house? Not me!

So, let's figure out how to get rid of gnats in plants... but first, it's important to understand where they came from in the first place, so we can make sure they never come back.

WHERE DO FUNGUS GNATS COME FROM?

A fungus gnat infestation can [come from anywhere](#). The most common ways fungus gnats get into your house are either they're in the soil of a newly purchased plant, or in a bag of potting mix that you bring indoors.

But fungus gnats can also come in with a plant that was outside during the summer. Heck, they can even fly in through the screen of an open window or door.



Fungus gnats in potting soil bags left open

HOW TO GET RID OF FUNGUS GNATS IN HOUSEPLANTS SOIL

Fungus gnats are difficult to eliminate if you have a large number of indoor plants. The adults can easily fly or jump from one plant to the next, laying eggs wherever they find moist soil.

Like fruit flies, the adult fungus gnats only live for a few days. So, once all the larvae are dead, your fungus gnat problem will go away.

There's no need to resort to toxic synthetic pesticides, fungus gnats can easily be fought using [all-natural pest control remedies and methods](#). Below are the best methods to use to rid your indoor plants of those annoying flying gnats...



Neem oil organic pest control for gnats

1. Control soil moisture – Fungus gnat larvae thrive in moist soil, and they can't survive in dry soil.

So, the easiest and most effective method of plant gnats control, and ultimately eliminating fungus gnats, is to make sure you never overwater your plants.

Be careful though, you don't want to allow the soil to dry out completely on most houseplants. Use a [soil moisture gauge](#) to help maintain the perfect level of moisture for your houseplants, and get rid of gnats in plant soil.

[Indoor plant watering devices](#) also make watering houseplants easier, and help you avoid overwatering so you can get rid of plant gnats.

2. Water plants from the bottom – Fungus gnat larvae live in the top inch of the soil, which tends to stay pretty moist when you water plants from the top.

Bottom watering plants will make it easier to maintain dryer top soil, without risking the overall health of the plant.

To water your plants from the bottom simply pour water into the plants drip tray or cache pot, and allow the plant to soak up the water through the drainage holes.

Never allow your plant to sit in water for too long. Dump out any remaining water after about 30 minutes of soaking.



Eradicating fungus gnats by bottom watering plants

3. Use yellow houseplant sticky stakes – Putting a [yellow sticky trap](#) near the plant is a super safe pest control method that will attract and capture the adult fungus gnats.

This will only be effective to control the adult population, it will not take care of the problem at the source (the larvae).

But yellow sticky traps definitely help to keep the adult fungus gnats from flying around to other

plants.



Yellow houseplant sticky stakes control fungus gnats

4. Apply organic pest control products – Pour or spray an organic [insecticidal soap](#) or a soapy water mix (I use [Dr. Bronner's Baby-mild Liquid Soap](#)) or neem oil mixture into the top of the soil to kill gnats in potted plants. These natural gnat pesticide treatments should be effective after a few applications.

Neem oil works great to kill houseplant pests, and has a residual effect that helps with pest prevention. You can [buy neem oil here](#).





Soapy water will kill gnats in potted plants

5. Remove the gnat infested soil – Remove the top inch of potting soil and replace it with new, sterile [potting soil](#).

This will remove fungus gnat eggs and larvae, and make it easier to gain the upper hand.

Just keep in mind that gnat eggs in soil could still hatch and mature after you remove it from your plant, so make sure you take it outside to the trash.

6. Use soil covers – Replace the top inch of soil with a layer of [sand](#), gravel or decorative moss [soil covers](#).

This will help control gnats in soil, and deter them from laying eggs. Plus soil covers also add a nice decorative touch.

You could also use a product called [Gnatnix](#), which is a non-toxic soil cover that works great for eradicating fungus gnats.



7. Store unused potting soil in a sealed container. Open potting soil bags can also be a breeding ground for fungus gnats, so make sure you keep that in mind when storing unused soil.

I store all of my potting soil in buckets that have a tight fitting lid rather than in the bag it comes in. Fungus gnats can't survive without oxygen.

If you don't have an air-tight container you can use for storing plant potting soil, I recommend [Gamma seal lids](#). They work with any standard [five gallon bucket](#).

8. Never reuse potting soil. I know it's tempting to pinch pennies by reusing potting soil for indoor plants, but you're just asking for trouble. Always use a fresh, sterile potting soil mix when repotting your plants.

The most important thing to remember for eradicating fungus gnats is to control how much you water houseplants. Remember, fungus gnats live and breed in moist soil, and overwatering is the number one cause of houseplant gnats.

Even if you are successful in eliminating a fungus gnat infestation from your house, recurring problems are difficult to prevent. The good news is that fungus gnats are one of the easiest houseplant pests to control.

If houseplant pests are driving you crazy, and you want to learn how to get rid of plant bugs once and for all, check out my [Houseplant Pest Control eBook](#)! It will help you identify common houseplant bugs, and show you exactly how to kill them before they kill your beloved plants! [Download your copy today](#), and get rid of bugs on houseplants for good!

PLANT PEST CONTROL PRODUCTS I RECOMMEND

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOUSEPLANT PEST CONTROL

- [Organic Indoor Pest Control Supplies](#)
- [How To Use Neem Oil As Organic Pest Control](#)
- [How To Get Rid Of Houseplant Bugs Naturally](#)
- [How To Debug Plants Before Bringing Them Indoors](#)

Leave a comment below and share your tips for how to get rid of fungus gnats in houseplants soil.

How To Get Rid Of **FUNGUS GNATS** In Houseplants Soil



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CATEGORIES: [HOUSEPLANT PESTS](#)

ABOUT AMY ANDRYCHOWICZ

I live and garden in Minneapolis, MN (zone 4b). My green thumb comes from my parents, and I've been gardening most of my life. I'm a passionate gardener who loves growing everything from vegetables, herbs, and flowers to succulents, tropicals, and houseplants - you name, I've grown it! [Read More...](#)

COMMENTS

Anonymous says

I have had fungus gnats in the past. Every time I got rid of them they would come back. So I read on someones blog that if you put half an inch of sand on the top of your soil the gnats wont be able to reach the dirt. I did this to all 40 of my plants and within 3 days my problem was cured. It's been over a year and they haven't been able to make a come back.

REPLY

Precious says

Hey. What type of sand?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

You could use a coarse sand, or a decorative sand.

REPLY

Yuccaplant88 says

How do you water them when sand is on top? Do you water them from bottom?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

I just water right over the sand, but you could water from the bottom.

REPLY

Jenna says

Do you put the sand right over top soil with the gnats in there?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

I recommend removing the top inch of soil, which is where the fungus gnats larvae lives. Then either replacing that with sand, or adding some fresh clean and dry soil first, with sand over the top of that.

H Munster says

Great article. I hate fungus gnats!

Pretty much all store bought soil is precontaminated with fungus gnats. For some plants they are more than a nuisance and can kill or retard growth. If possible, the best cure is prevention, i have found zapping potting soil in the microwave until it is steaming a bit is effective at sterilization. this help kill mold and fungus as well. Allow your plants to dry out before watering. Avoid over watering and use sand as a top layer as the article states. Neem oil helps, but these critters are tough to kill once they take hold.

REPLY



Amy Andrychowicz says

Yes, I agree that fungus gnats are very common in store bought soil. I've seen them flying around bags of soil at the store many times. Those bags are certainly not air tight, and often have holes in them. Thanks for your added tips for getting rid of fungus gnats!

REPLY

Ken Rogers says

My father in law once told me that they used to sell bags of compost in sealed bags with no holes, but it would create the ideal environment for fungus gnats and other pests to grow. So thats why they started eating locusts in Africa and started putting holes in compost bags,

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Yes, I'm sure it causes problems with mold, however fungus gnats can't live without oxygen. I store my unused potting soil in a sealed plastic bucket, and that keeps those little buggers out. 😊

Claudia Fentresss says

These little bugs that I found today that are killing my veg. on closed in patio are so small I don't know how many it would take to make a grain of salt. I bought plants at WalMart. You can hardly see them, just a little speck moving around potted soil. Are they fungus gnats. And can I use vinegar and water mix on soil.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Yes, those sound like fungus gnats to me. The bugs aren't what's killing your plants though, it's the fact that they are being overwatered. Wet soil is a breeding ground for fungus gnats, and a sign that the plants are being overwatered. Letting the soil dry out a bit between waterings will help slow the gnats down. I would not recommend using vinegar in the soil though, that could kill the plants. Follow the tips above and you should be able to get rid of the gnats.

REPLY

Yiayia says

I was told to put out vinegar to attract and drown the adults. Alone it did not work but when I set the little container on a bright yellow plastic plate, the gnats came to it and I began to see the black specks in the vinegar.

REPLY

Viper says

Next time drop a teaspoon of sugar in it as well as 2 or 3 drops of liquid soap...also, they prefer apple cider vinegar...I've caught thousands with this method

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

I think you might be talking about fruit flies instead of fungus gnats. Fruit flies are the ones that are attracted to apple cider vinegar. Fungus gnats like moist potting soil.



REPLY

Mary Ann says

I Put apple cider vinegar and a couple of drops of dish soap in a small bowl and I've been attracting alot of them they were attracted to it

REPLY

Mark Valentino says

Thing is you want to repel them not attract them, There are so many methods to not getting these bugs in ur soil, so much info online... I bake and sterilise soil, Grow lavender, basil, peppermint, in-between ur plants, use yellow sticky strips as a backup, will use sand and bark to cover the soil with Damascus earth,, had infestation in my fruits and veggies before in my house, never again though...This was from a bag of contaminated soil, got into the lot of them....Happy growing, ur welcome

Carol Windhorst says

I couldn't catch them with anything, till I sat a cup of coffee with cream, and I started catching them like crazy. Apparently they like coffee, don't forget the creamer. LOL

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says



Haha, that's hilarious! I've never seen fungus gnats in my coffee... but I don't use creamer. LOL!

REPLY

Monya says

I bought fruit fly traps that don't work as well as just leaving a cup of coffee (no cream or sugar) on the counter, and I had to start keeping a cover over my coffee pot because the fruit flies (gnats ?) would get in the coffee in the pot !!

REPLY

Tiffany says

Haha! Yes! This happened to me this morning....and every morning! I'm over it!

REPLY

Jill Carroll says

Yes! They were flying in my coffee WITH cream also!

REPLY

Anonymous says

I read that you can use ground cinnamon sprinkled on top of the soil but I can't remember what it is for. I tried it for those annoying gnats and it seemed to work. I had to do all of my plants and I don't have as many as the people above. So it



may have been a fluke. Have you heard of using cinnamon before? Do you know what it would have been recommended for exactly? Thanks for your great tips for controlling fungus gnats!

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Yes, I have heard the same thing too. I've heard that ground cinnamon works for soil gnats, and also for fungus problems. I haven't tried it myself, mostly because cinnamon is so expensive... I have a lot of plants! 😊 I'm glad to hear that you've had success with it. I'm curious to know how long it will last, keep me posted.

Amy

REPLY

Viper says

You need to use a lot of cinnamon so that fact alone makes its not a great method. Also too much will affect the plants negatively..been there, done that—a big expensive nasty fail

REPLY

B.Taylor says

The cinnamon is more commonly used for outdoor plants and ants. Ants hate the cinnamon. I've even used cinnamon indoors when ants would invade the kitchen! But good to know the gnats aren't going to eat on my mayberries or lemonbalm! noticed a few this morning and will be getting some sand asap!

REPLY

Julie says

I've never heard of this Amy. Interestingly I might have them. I've been noticing little bugs all winter which is odd they look like fruit flies so I've been assuming that's what they are. I do have a stevia plant and cat grass...

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Wow, glad that I could help you out! 😊 Yes, they are definitely fungus gnats. Fruit flies don't hang around the soil of plants, they only care about fruit or stuff that's fermenting. They are annoying, aren't they.

Amy

REPLY

Donna says

Spray bottle full of rubbing alcohol. Spray the dirt. Works well on powdery mildew as well.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Great, thanks for the tip Donna! I will try it.

Amy

REPLY

Wendy says

Have tried the rubbing alcohol, it does not work.

REPLY

Sarah Dorison says

I use GnatNix!

REPLY

Candy says

Where did you purchase gnatnix??

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

You can get it on Amazon... [Here \(Gnatnix\)](#)

REPLY

Gardening Products Review says

Hi Amy,

I have to agree that GnatNix is fabulous. Stopped fungus gnats cold for me. I even used it when starting seeds indoors (had to wait until the seedlings were big enough first). It's made out of expanded, recycled glass so although it looks like pumice, it's not mined and I guess you could call it "sustainable." I like that it's chemical-free. And it looks good. Just my two cents...

Monica



REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Wonderful, thanks for the feedback Monica! I love that it's non-toxic too, and it looks nice.

Amy

REPLY

Michael says

i worry about using gnat nix on food products
eating glass is unappealing

REPLY

Katie cat says

If you wash the plant really good that will remove the gnatnix from the plant. I hope that helps you out.

REPLY

Michael says

Can you get gnats in hydroponics?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Soil gnats love moisture, so if there's anywhere that they can land and possibly breed in the medium you use for hydroponics... then yes, it is possible.



Barbara says

i had fungus gnats once too. I think they came from a bag of soil I got. Luckily it was at the beginning of my plant obsession and didn't have too many plants. The sticky traps worked and not watering as often seemed to get rid of them.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

I had them come in from a bag of potting soil once too, was not happy to discover that! Glad to hear you got rid of your gnats quickly!

REPLY

Joan says

Hi, I have two mini small rose bushes and used Rose bush soil and now I have flies or gnats flying in the soil. Does cactus soil come without bugs because the soil I was using had these flies in it. What's the best soil and can I use cactus soil.

Joan

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

I don't think you should use cactus soil for rose bushes, it would dry out too quickly for them. Here is a quality, organic potting soil I recommend... [organic potting soil](#). But keep in mind that potting soil bags are not air-tight, so any type of moist soil you buy at the store could have fungus gnats in it.

REPLY

Sharon says

Thanks for all of the tips! I was so worried about my favorite purple passion who is a nice size and started from one baby cutting. Great site. Keep up the good work!?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

You're welcome!

REPLY

Sharon says

Ps. I also use apple cider vinegar mixed with a floral dish in a cup topped with tin foil with holes from a tooth pick. They help with regular gnats and fruit flies.

REPLY

Sharon says

Sorry... Dish soap. Oops.

REPLY

Moni says

I'm just starting the whole plant thing so I'm about as experienced as a second grader. I have a mint plant that is having a rough time. The gnats seem to like the mint more than the yarrow and the lemon balm. Unfortunately, I'm pretty strapped as far as money goes so my main option is allowing the soil to dry out. However, since the mint is already struggling, I'm fearful that I might be killing it if I let it dry too much. Any additional suggestions?? It is December, so I'm hoping the mint is only hibernating.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

I've also hear that cinnamon sprinkled over the top of the soil can help to control soil gnats, but I haven't tried that myself. Have you tried a bit of soapy water?

REPLY

Alexis Cano says

It's been my experience that was mint plants it will usually grow like a weed. So if you back off on the watering for a week I think you'll be just fine. I've been growing a chocolate mint plant that has pretty much taken over my backyard. Like a weed and I bought it from Walmart or Garden Ridge or something. And I live next to a bayou ditch. And the mint plant is a natural deterrent for insect pests. If I were you I would just try the sand any old sandal work. Good luck

REPLY

Donna W. says



I usually squirt a bit of liquid dish soap (Palmolive works well) in a paper cup and add water close to the top of the cup and let it foam up. Place the cup near the plants that have the problem. The next day, I will have many of the little pests in the cup. That way, you can flush them down the toilet and throw the cup away. You might have to do it a few times, but it will alleviate the problem.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Interesting. So, they are attracted to the water in the cup? I'll have to try that. Thanks for sharing your method for controlling soil gnats!

REPLY

maureen says

Cinnamon is used for ants i had a problem awhile back, wanted something that wouldn't be toxic to my grandchildren and pets an exterminator recommend cinnamon it worked like a charm

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Awesome, thanks for sharing your experience!

REPLY

Tania says

Cinnamon is really good for orchids! Tried sprinkling it on my other plants to get rid of gnats but didn't really work. I'm gonna try the soapy water this time. Darn gnats, they're driving us nuts!!

REPLY



Amy Andrychowicz says

Orchids don't need moist soil, they get their moisture from the air through their leaves, not through the roots. So make sure you're letting the potting medium dry out. That way, the gnats have nowhere to live.

REPLY

Carol Keith says

I had read that a mix of hydrogen peroxide and water will kill those larvae, but don't see that here. I saw it on a backyard horticulturist site. He said to mix the 2, and pour this combo on plants, with no ill effects to plants, but can't find his blog to see the measurements. My infestation has even crept into my laptop, somehow. Everytime I turn it on, they appear in high numbers. I am desperate, now that I know they are fungus gnats, and have tried sticky strips, and cider vinegar. Anyone who can help would be appreciated. I have one combo plant that is almost 25yrs. old, and don't want to lose it. Also have found hundreds down my bath sink drain, and no exterminator will help.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Yes, watering the plants with soapy water will definitely kill them. I did mention it in the 4th bullet point, but breezed over it. 😊 I use 1 tsp of [Dr. Bronner's Baby-mild Liquid Soap](#) per 1 liter of water. Make sure you're not overwatering your houseplants because the gnats thrive in wet soil. Also make sure you don't have any open bags of potting soil sitting around the house. That happened to me one year, had an open bag of potting soil I totally forgot about and it took me a few days to figure out where all the soil gnats were coming from. Ugh! Tossed it outside in the freezing cold and that

took care of the gnats! 😊 Oh, and the gnats are attracted to heat, so that's probably why they swarm your laptop.

REPLY

Carol Keith says

Thanks for the reply,Amy,but they aeem to be coming from my laptop.Is that possible?I have let the plant dry out,but need to water now.Have you heard any good post on the peroxide/water mix?I am having trouble getting the soap you mentioned.I don't have any potting soil in the house,but did use some from a large bag that my relative gave me.When the problem arose I put it outside and it has frozen also.I don't see them near that plant,in the same room as the laptop,and never did,but I did use some of that soil to top off that plant.Pls let me know what you think about the peroxide mix and any alternative soap,plus any thoughts on eliminating them from my laptop,(they come from the back of the pc,which is across the room from the plant...you would think I would see them in transit.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Oh man Carol, I'm not sure what to tell you. I'm pretty sure they are not soil gnats, because soil gnats need moisture to live. So, unless you have water in your laptop, then those bugs are something else. I would call a computer expert and see if they know what it could be, and what you could do to get rid of them. 😞

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Oh, and as far as a peroxide mix goes... I've never tried that before. But, you don't have to use the same soap as I do, you can use any type of liquid soap as long as it doesn't contain detergents or degreasing chemicals.



REPLY

Carol Keith says

Thanks Amy.I have talked with other pc ppl and some say anything is possible,so did an exterminator.I will try the soap fix since I can't find that original site.I appreciate the advice.Oh,yes they are soil or fungus gnats,I have examined them pretty closely and have many corpses to examine,uuggghhh.

CSavell says

Peroxide mix does work! Just put 1 Tablespoon of 3% (from the drugstore) in 1 cup of water. Fully soak the soil with the mixture and it will disrupt their life cycle. You still need to eliminate the live bugs. Repeat after a few days. Do this to your plant soil obviously NOT your laptop 🤮

REPLY

Olivia says

This peroxide mixture will not harm my plants? I have many angel wing begonia and other various plants that I do not want to kill, but I have to get rid of these gnats!!

Nadine says

I just spoke with an IT friend of mine and he has seen this before. He told me that if food gets into the laptop somehow, (eating while

using the laptop), or if pet fur gets into the fan, bugs will be attracted to it. It might just need a good cleaning.

REPLY

Julie says

Please, please mention that soil/fungus gnats BITE! I have plants in every room and I wake up with new.bites every morning 🤮. So far, I have only used sticky trap strips that I found cheaply at Walmart. I know they work and am now just waiting (insert villainous laughter here).

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

No, fungus gnats do not bite.

REPLY

Heather says

They will most definitely find your laptop. I forget where but I read that they are attracted to the light. My guess is it is actually the heat. They also like the CO2 that we exhale. We would be swatting them away at the dinner table. Freaking GROSS!! I have also tried the peroxide, A.C. vinegar and yellow traps. Dish soap in a bowl too. Nothing. I am going to try the baking method and pray that works. They are finally to a manageable level but they are still around. Came in with a bag of organic potting soil and I didn't realize until after I'd repotted nearly ALL of my house plants! As for the drains, I had that issue too. If you get them in the house and they make it to the bathroom, curves in the drain make them super happy. Pour straight peroxide in the drains... ALL of them from wherever you have an opening. Including the little

safety hole in your sink for the water not to go above a certain point. Wait a while. Boil water. Pour it down all the drains. Do this once every two weeks for two months. (just to be safe). The Larva cycle is about two weeks so this is why you wait the two weeks. So you can cut off the cycles. They can easily create multiple generations at once so by doing 4 rounds two weeks apart, you should have effectively killed any and all stages by the 4th round. I don't know how old your comment was but I hope this helps at least one person!!!



REPLY

Cate says

A sensible answer at last !

REPLY

Dr. Green Thumb says

Ahh, those infamous Fungus Gnats. I had to deal with them (and sometimes still do) a few years back. The 0.5 – 1" layer of sand fully covering the soil works well from keeping the adults from laying eggs. Sand dries(lets water pass through) quickly, and adult Fungus Gnats are looking for something moist to lay their eggs on.

Now about the hydrogen peroxide and water mix. It most definitely works, and very well in fact. I've noticed, and I'm sure others have&will also, that it does have a dual-purpose. You'll see the soil fizzing (like when applied to a topical cut on your skin) and it actually 'fluffs up' the soil. Which really helps when your soil dries and has compacted exposing an open edge along the inner-side of a pot.

Although now, keep in mind that the fizzing isn't only killing the larvae/eggs and fungus, but also some of the organic material that may be feeding your plant(s). So what I've been doing after an initial soil treatment, I would/will still just spray the top layer of the soil with almost pure hydrogen peroxide. Because after a while, the preventative sand will eventually merge in with the existing soil.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Awesome, thanks for sharing your experience and your tips for controlling fungus gnats!

REPLY

janell farrell says

I have a money tree house plant that came with white decorative rock sealing the top of the planter. I water it once a week with 4 oz of water poured over the rock. I've had it about a month and just in the last few days have seen gnats crawling over the rock. Help please

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

The decorative rock really won't help to keep the fungus gnats away. The reason sand works is because it dries faster, and creates over the soil so that the adult gnats can't get to it and lay their eggs. They can easily find their way between the larger pieces of decorative rock.

REPLY

Hourik Kazarian says

Mosquito Bits from amazon are supposed to kill the larvae. I use it and I'm usually gnat free. Also, diatomaceous earth on the top of the soil. Yellow stickie tape and the previous two products have eradicated my gnat problem.



REPLY

Renate says

You could also add some Neem Oil to the soapy water mixture. Spray directly on the leaves (to kill the Kant's that are on the plants) and from reading this article, spraying on the soil (to kill the eggs). I've had success with this mixture on other plant bugs (aphids, Neely Bugs). Gonna try it on my fungus gnat problems (as I just found from reading this article fungus gnats were my pesky little problem.

REPLY

Sheri says

I've tried the peroxide. It's one part to four parts water.

REPLY

Madonna says

I wish I had this info sooner. Our office always received a multitude of chrysanthemums at Christmas. Within a few days we could hardly have a conversation without swatting away an insect. On Friday our plant lady would put a plastic bag over them and a secure with a rubber band after treating the soil. By Monday they would be dead and the bag could be removed.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

That's a great tip, thanks!

REPLY



Brianna says

Awesome list! Never knew I had so many options. The gnats almost drove me crazy before I managed to get them out of my orchids.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Thank you! Yes, they are super annoying!

REPLY

Tara says

So glad to hear you were able to eradicate fungus gnats. I'm still trying to get rid of mine, and I have to admit, it is a battle unlike anything else I've ever experienced in all my years of having house plants. I am well into 2nd month of treatments and they have lessened but not completely eliminated. Good Luck!

REPLY

Tianna says

thanks for these tips! those gnats are always so annoying! I'm trying to have houseplants and also grow some plants outside, at the moment, so this is helpful!

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says



Great, glad you found it helpful! Thanks for stopping by!

REPLY

Teresa says

I was so glad to see your article! I had soil gnats for the first time recently and had no idea what they were. I've had many house plants through the years, but had not experienced these little pests. This was very enlightening to me and I'll know what to do if it happens again!

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Awesome, glad I could help!

REPLY

Danielle says

I live on an island in Cohoes NY and our house seems to be covered with little bugs all of a sudden with the nice weather starting. I had no other word to google for them in my head but gnats! We purchased the home less than a year ago, so I have no idea the source. Will talk with neighbors to see if they have the same problem. I am not sure if these tips will work as there are a lot of them everywhere, but will definitely give them a try.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Oh yuck, sorry to hear it! Good luck figuring it out!



REPLY

Phyllis Wenger says

Neem oil works great but I made the mistake of spraying it on my grape vines and haven't gotten any grapes for 2 years now. As I understand Neem, it has an antibiotic effect which is kind of a birth control for bacteria so they die because they can't reproduce. It seems that the Neem oil had the "birth control" effect on my grape vines. 😞 So, I don't use Neem oil on any of my vegetable plants anymore. Let me know if you have any other information on Neem oil!

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Humm... neem oil does have fungicidal properties, but not anti-bacterial – at least not that I know of. Neem oil would not prevent grape vines from setting flowers and fruit. I suspect there's something else going on.

REPLY

Jethro says

Your grapes have some other problem not related to neem oil at all.

REPLY

Alison says

I have just a very few gnats flying around. But many many house plants. If I just take away the top quarter to half inch of soil and put sand on top... Will that somehow help if there are any larvae in there?



REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says
Yes, that should help.

REPLY

R Moran says

Peroxide mix-1 part peroxide to 4 parts water . It does work . Let soil dry first and then spray soil till well dampened. Do this every other watering.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says
Cool! Thanks for sharing your tip, great to know!

REPLY

Julie says

This is perfect timing for me to find, we have an infestation from one of the house plants but I can't find which one. I've got it almost under control with the yellow sticky trap things but there always seems to be one or two just drifting round the house annoying us all! My husband is threatening to chuck out all the house plants which I think is a bit drastic. I'm going to try some more of these ideas. thanks so much.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says



The problem is that they move from plant to plant, so they're probably in more than one of your plants. Good luck and I hope you get rid of them!

REPLY

Bob Huston says

What would be the best remedy for pepper seedlings we started in the house ?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Water your seedlings from the bottom rather than the top, and try to allow the top of the soil to dry out a bit between waterings. I also like to run a fan near my seedlings to help keep the air moving. Also, if your seedlings are large enough, you can pot them up into new containers where it will be easier to keep the top layer of soil on the dry side. Here's a post I wrote with all the details about [how to care for seedlings](#) that you should definitely read for more information.

REPLY

zoe majewski says

Can I leave sand on top indefinitely? I water my Bonsai ficus let dry right out then wait a day or 2 and still as soon as I water the gnats come back within a couple days.. I did the sand it worked and over winter no gnats now spring and they are coming in again..

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says



Yes, you can leave the sand on indefinitely, and refresh it or add more whenever you need to. Glad to hear that trick worked for you! 😊

REPLY

Jennifer says

I have them in my closed terrarium. It has to stay moist because that's how it works. I can't use a layer of sand because it will kill the mosses. Because it's a closed environment, it's really susceptible to anything that changes it's equilibrium so I can't use a spray pesticide and I can't water anything into the soil.

I have been killing them by hand as they land on the glass and I will try sticky traps. I can't think of anything else to try – can anyone think of something else?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

I would look into getting a venus fly trap, or some other carnivorous plant to add to your terrarium.

REPLY

Lori says

If I leave the potting soil(still in the bag)out in the sun for a couple of days will that kill the gnats?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says



No, because the bags are never air tight. I would recommend finding an air tight container and putting it in there for a few weeks to kill the gnats.

REPLY

Viper says

The easiest method for most people will be to add a 2 or 3 inch layer of perlite on top of the soil. They hate crawling through the stuff. You can also do sand but I just don't like the idea of too much sand mixing with my soil..

REPLY

Pauline says

what about putting aquarium gravel instead of sand? Would that work as well?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Yes, soil covers can help to deter fungus gnats.

REPLY

Jenny Bushey says

What about using diatomaceous earth on top instead of sand? does that work?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says



I would expect that DE would work to kill fungus gnats, but I haven't tried it myself. Give it a shot, and let us know if it works for you!

REPLY

shan says
it worked for me!

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says
Woohoo, that's great! Thanks for letting us know that the Diatomaceous earth worked to get rid of the your fungus gnats!

REPLY

Sally says

I looked high and low on my tablet for days to find something to annihilate those "in your face" flies and found a sure fire cure. Mix 1 part hydrogen peroxide (3%) to 4 parts water and wet the top inch of the soil. It kills the eggs instantly and all you have to do, is water one more time with the mixture as there will be some eggs laid again. I have been doing this for a few years now, and it keeps them under control. They love trying to fly up your nose, and hover around your face as they are attracted to carbon dioxide which you expel when you exhale. Hope this helps. Has no effect on the plants.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says



Great, thanks for your recipe! I will have to try it if fungus gnats become a problem in my house this winter after I bring all my plants back inside.

REPLY

Anna says

FYI, this may be late, but Mosquito dunks or granules will also work, they are all natural. They have a particular bacteria that is feeds on the larva of both mosquitoes and Fungal gnats. I sprinkle in the fall before I bring my plants indoors for the winter and again if they start to reappear later.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Thanks for the tip about killing fungus gnat larvae! Can you share what brand of all-natural mosquito dunks you use? I definitely want to try this out.

REPLY

Maria Mane says

I always go for a natural solution to everything that happens in my garden. I want everything I grow to be as organic and natural as possible. I use vanilla extract to chase them away. I know, it's weird. I also thought that when I read it on ohealtheyeah.com/fungus-gnats , but it works! They also have some nice homemade natural repellants that can work good if you want to give it a try. Has anyone else used vanilla extract before?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says



Thanks for sharing the tip about vanilla extract deterring fungus gnats! I've never heard of that, but what a great solution. It would smell lovely! I'll definitely have to give it a try if I ever have a fungus gnat problem again. 😊

REPLY

Tara says

My review consists of my on-going battle with fungus gnats. I had no clue one could get infestation in one's home when it is zero degrees outside, crazy! I also had no idea that potting soil comes w/larvae within it. I'm a month into treatment and still they exist. Should i go over what I've done so others will know there is a treatment BUT will take months to eradicate these little devils? Sand on the soil, what a joke, what you need is a larvicide that contains *Bacillus thuringiensis*, subsp. *israelensis* or Bti in it. Safe for plants, humans and pets, but kills fungus gnat larvae. The goal is to go after the larvae, as they lay over 300 eggs in top 2 inches of the soil per landing, YUK! You also need yellow sticky traps to catch adults. This process will work, but please know not overnight. My plants are huge tropical plants or I would've just thrown them out and started over. The yellow sticky traps catch adults that land on them and they die. This will also tell you how the treatment is working. As the eggs die off, the theory is, the adults will wane and get caught on tape and die. This week will be my 4th treatment (drench) overall and third with BTi. First soil drench was w/hydrogen peroxide. Anyway, once this drench is complete and soil on top dried, i'll be removing the top 2 inches of soil where dead larvae are. However, what scares me is I need to back fill these plants with new potting soil! Dare I? The entire infestation could start completely over again? Help! I NEED POTTING SOIL NOT CONTAMINATED W/FUNGUS GNAT LARVAE! Thoughts??? maybe I'll nuke the soil before using it or maybe the zero temps killed the eggs as left over soil has been stored in garage???

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says



Thanks for sharing your thoughts and experience. The sub zero temps definitely would kill any soil gnat larvae in the soil. I also recommend storing your unused soil in a sealed container.

REPLY

Tara says

And the battle continues! Will try storing potting soil in air tight container as well, thank you for suggestion. I am still using BTi but have added neem oil fungicide spray to the regime. I am spraying the top soil w/Neem oil after BTi drench plus even more yellow sticky traps. Somethings bound to change eventually, fingers crossed 😊

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Have you considered giving [GnatNix](#) a try? It's a soil cover that is specifically made for getting rid of fungus gnats, and might be just what you need to finally win the battle.

REPLY

Tara says

No, not yet, but will try. I saw reviews that said GnatNix is quite messy, but at this point I'm willing to put up with whatever mess there is to end this. Thank you for your support and ideas, much appreciate them, sort of helps talk me off the 'ledge' so-to-speak, LOL.

Amy Andrychowicz says

You're welcome, good luck!



Lissa says

Let me just say, I know a LOT (like a warehouse of useless information re: fruit flies and gnats), and I'm the all organic, I have pets and a special needs child, so I'm wicked uptight about what I put on my plates, indoor and out. More importantly, I HATE bugs. So when these black annoying flies popped up, I went bananas. They seem to propagate faster than rabbits, and while I might have clutter, I DO NOT have BUGS. Except. Now, I do. First, I took out the top two inches of soil (wearing fabulously pretty RUBBER gloves – fabric ones tend to keep the dreadful yet hardy hangers-on little larvae bastards), replaced with Clay based all natural kitty litter. Good news! The kitties hate this litter, so they're finally leaving my plants alone! Clay isn't terribly inviting to these gnats; so step one, kinda complete. Secondly, water with peroxide. I do love me some peroxide! Added two – three drops of Dawn liquid – straight up blue kind. Broke up cinnamon sticks, (again, keeps kitties at bay) and, eh, why not. Someone said it would help. We shall see. Next up: coffee grounds. Sprinkle liberally over the top of each plants soil.

Ignore Hubby who thought I was nuts keeping my potting soil outside in the freezing New England temps. Hit up a pal for his kitty litter boxes (we don't use the same kind) – works a treat! Airtight, water proof, I even painted mine pretty colors. These guys do not hibernate. They die. Taking all 200-300 of their babies, per fly with them.

Okay, stay with me here: for watering concerns, I took the Keurig little coffee pod things, moved a used pod around in there, allowing the big sharp needle to poke more than one whole in the bottom of plastic pod-thing. Left the filter liner in pod. Buried it under the litter, with a marker, (two in bigger plants, or however many you think you might need) and water ONLY there. Water goes below Breeding Ground.

I won't say I'm Bug Free....but no war was won in one battle!

REPLY



Amy Andrychowicz says

Thanks for sharing all of the things you've tried, and your experience with fighting fungus gnats! I love your mini DIY plant watering devices that you made out of the Keurig pods – what a great idea! I'm not sure if coffee grounds does anything to get rid of fungus gnats, and I wouldn't recommend using them on indoor plants. They can mold and cause other problems on indoor plants. Have you tried using [neem oil](#) yet? Tara mentioned in that post that the neem oil worked like a charm for her, and she's fungus gnat free now!

REPLY

Johnny West says

A long time ago, I read that you could get rid of ALL pests in soil by baking the soil in an oven for 2 hours at 350 degrees. It takes time but if you are a picky gardener, it truly works, especially helpful with seedlings because it gets rid of all the fungus types that kill seedlings (damp-off, etc.) and all the insects that may be lurking. I do this with any soil, especially if I re-use soil (which saves me money in the long run). Nothing living can withstand 350 degrees for 2 hours. It isn't a bad smell and you have to do it with whatever quantities you can fit in the oven in a pan at a time. I'm going to use the sand method as well as the peroxide spray, have been using some dish soap spray with some luck.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Thanks for sharing your tip about baking the soil. I've never tried that myself, so I can't speak to it.

REPLY

Z says

Hello I'm new to this gardening thing I have veggie and fruit plants and these gnats won't leave my tomatoes or strawberries alone, I don't know if its killing my plants because they are still producing but some of the leaves are dying off. I've been adding castile soap with a dash of cayenne powder and water it seem like it was working but now there are so many I feel I should throw my plants out and start over, I don't know what else to do. please help if you can.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Don't worry, the fungus gnats won't kill your plants, they are only a nuisance. However, soggy soil is a breeding ground for fungus gnats, and I'm worried that you're overwatering your plants (which will kill them over time). So, allow the soil to dry out more between waterings, you never want it to stay wet. You can also water the plants from the bottom, which will help to keep the top layer of soil dry. Hopefully you'll be moving those plants outside to the garden soon, and then you won't have to worry about those annoying gnats anymore.

REPLY

Z says

Thank you! They are very annoying, but my plants are outside on my patio, it's a "container garden". I let the plants dry out, I removed 1 in of soil it seems they're deeper than that, also tried castile soap, water, and a bit of cayenne pepper but the gnats still didn't leave lol smh. I'll try watering from the bottom, do you know if neem oil does anything for them?

Also, thank you for this post it helps to be able to chat with people that have the same problem to come up with solutions.

REPLY



Amy Andrychowicz says

You're welcome, glad I could help! Yes, neem oil works to kill fungus gnats.

REPLY

Pepe says

They actually kill plants. Especially small ones with weak roots. I lost like 5 of my plants.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

It's more likely that your plants died from being overwatered rather than the fungus gnats killing them.

REPLY

Tracy says

I have these in my Turtle tank and cannot kill them! I have tried everything! Any suggestions?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Humm, that's a tough one since the turtle tank stays moist all the time. I would empty it out and clean it really good for starters, and toss out any material that could be used as a breeding ground for the fungus gnats. Do you have plants and soil in the tank at all?

REPLY

Claire says

Hi. I'm really curious as to how you keep fungus/mold from growing on your unused soil if kept in an airtight bucket? There is usually dampness to the soil when you purchase it and use it. If transferring to a bucket without holes, how does it not get fuzzy mold or issues? Please and thank you!

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

I had that happen to a bucket of soil only once before, but it's not very common. If the soil is already contaminated with fungus or mold, then yes, it can grow in there. You could allow the soil to dry out a bit before sealing the bucket, and that may help.

REPLY

Bambam says

Thank You ! I almost got rid of my big beautiful Aloe plant.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Oh no! You're welcome, glad I could help. It should be pretty easy to get rid of fungus gnats in your aloe plant because aloes prefer dry soil, and fungus gnats need moist soil to survive. If you're keeping the soil moist enough for the fungus gnats to live, then your aloe plant will definitely suffer, and may eventually rot. Allow the soil to dry out completely between waterings, which will be better for the plant, and the fungus gnats should disappear.

REPLY

Audrey O says

I just noticed these today after watering my newly repotted plants. Luckily, the plants were sitting in the sink, so I noticed the gnats crawling all over the sink, and immediately came to do a search. Thanks for all your help. I think I'm going to try a soil covering. Will Sphagnum moss work? Also, since I just watered it, can I remove the soil immediately, or do I need to let it dry out for a few days first? Thanks again.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

I wouldn't recommend using sphagnum moss, that would just hold the moisture in the soil longer. I would let the soil dry out before removing any of it. If you remove it now, the gnats will just lay more eggs in the next layer of wet soil. Since you just repotted the plant, then the soil may have settled after watering it. So, if there's room, you could add a layer of dry soil over the top. That will help dry out the top layer of soil faster. Good luck!

REPLY

Monya Davison says

I think fungus gnats are eating and killing my indoor coleus. I have seen the gnats in the soil and when I disturb them, they fly away. The Get Busy Gardening website says that these gnats don't kill the plants, but it looks like they're eating the leaves and despite my spraying and watering with a weak solution of Dawn liquid soap, my coleus are dying. Help me!

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Sorry to hear that your plant is infested with fungus gnats. Yes, it's true that fungus gnats do not eat plant leaves. So, something else must be causing that damage. I would take a close look at the leaves to see if you can spot another type of pest that is eating them. If you could describe the damage you're seeing, I could give you more details of the type of pest to look for.

REPLY

Toni says

My brother-in-law suggests lighting candles for both fruit flies and fungus gnats to get rid of the live ones; to get to the source of the problem, the larvae, treat the soil. For fruit flies, I suggest washing fruits w/ a fruit wash and a brush when you bring them home, in case there are unhatched larvae on the fruit. Good luck.

I saw a lot of dead ones (fungus gnats) around the bathroom sink and had no idea that they were living and hatching in the drains. Thanks for that tip. I was about to throw out my plants.

REPLY

Monya Davison says

I saw little flies around my indoor coleus plants. One plant had its roots gone, and the other plants had the fuzzy texture eaten off the tops of their leaves with the destruction varying in size from a grapefruit seed to a dime. I saw the little flies burrowing down in the soil and thought they must be fungus gnats. I have started spraying the soil with Neem Oil solution. I also am using fruit fly traps. I have not been able to completely eliminate the flies around the house and outside.

Even if I can prevent the gnats from eating anymore roots, I still need to figure out what's eating the tops of the leaves. Do regular fruit flies eat

leaves? Can I spray my coleus with the Neem Oil solution?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

It sounds to me like your coleus plant is being overwatered. Fungus gnats are a sure sign over overwatering, and consistently soggy soil will also cause the roots to rot. Allow the soil to dry out more between waterings. As for the fuzzy stuff on the tops of the leaves... my guess is that is mold, but it could also be [mealybugs](#). Fruit flies and fungus gnats don't eat the leaves of plants.

REPLY

Shelley says

Hi, what amount of Dr Bronner soap to water ratio do you use?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

I use 1 tsp of Dr. Bronner's baby-mild liquid soap per 1 liter of water.

REPLY

Bev says

This is the first time I have ever had these awful fungus knats in my plants and yes I could swear at them AND they do try to go up your nose,at night, when you sit down,,,, I will try some of the ideas everyone is sharing.....How do I keep in touch with every one and you Amy?



REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Bummer, sorry to hear you're dealing with fungus gnats! Good luck, and I hope you'll be able to get rid of them using these tips. To keep in touch, be sure to bookmark this page so you can easily find it later. You can always find me on social media too (you can find all the links in the footer of the site).

REPLY

Aysha says

I have lots of fungus gnats around my houseplants. I just took the advice I read here and took an inch off the top and replaced it and then covered it with gravel. I used aquarium gravel. I'm new to anything plant related and I'm loving all the stuff I'm growing indoors. I also just planted some watercress, chilli and coriander seeds. Will they be able to come through the gravel?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Sorry to hear about your troubles with fungus gnats. I hope the gravel on top of the soil works for you. As for the seeds... I wouldn't cover the soil with a thick layer of gravel, because it will probably negatively affect the growth of the seedlings. I would use a thinner layer of sand or some other lighter weight soil cover for them.

REPLY



Linda says

What's the quantity of Dr. Bronner and neem oil in water?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

The short answer to your question is 1 1/2 teaspoon pure neem oil concentrate, 1 teaspoon Dr. Bronner's mild liquid soap, and 1 liter of water. But, you may want to read my detailed post about how to use neem oil, which gives more details about the dosage, as well as my recipe for homemade neem oil spray here... [How To Use Neem Oil Insecticide On Plants](#).

REPLY

Michele says

I found the following useful so far:

- * removing about an inch of topsoil (seal and trash it)
- (DO NOT ADD ANY NEW SOIL OR TOP COVER YET)
- * Immediately soak top few inches of remaining soil 3% H2O2 (undiluted)
- * Immediately separate plant from other plants in a room that:
 - * low humidity
 - * high air movement (fans)
- * Place a mason jar filled 1/4 with a foamy mixture of warm water and 2 to 4 pumps of "SOFT SOAP – soothing aloe vera" beside plant to catch last of live adult gnats

Leave one week without further watering.....

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Awesome, thanks for sharing your method of getting rid of fungus gnats! Sounds like have a good system.

REPLY



Michele says

Treating more harmful pests (like spider mites or any pests that live on back of plant leaves):

- * common treatments seem to be insecticidal soap or dish-soap spray and neem oil

- * also read about taking a cotton ball or q-tip and applying isopropyl alcohol and wiping leaves and stems. or using it as a spray

- * I TRIED TEA TREE OIL – i used a Q-tip dipped in 100% tea tree oil and gently wiped the back of a few leaves on my pothos and was surprised how many black dots got picked up off each leaf (with my eye I spotted only maybe 6, seemed more like 20 were living on the plant leaf)

.....worked well, no plant damage/toxicity

Has anyone else tried tea tree oil?

What about olive oil? I've heard it works just like neem oil but haven't tried yet... thanks~!

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

I have never tried tea tree oil before, and have never heard if that would work for keeping houseplant bugs away or not. I definitely would not recommend using any type of cooking oil, because it can clog the pores on plant leaves and end up causing major long-term damage. Some types of cooking oil can even attract bugs to plants, so it's best to stay away from using those.

REPLY

Ikeis says

it seems the best method would be to remove the top 1.5 inches of dirt in the plant, immediately replace it with very dry dirt and cover with plastic wrap while either throwing the removed dirt or letting it dry out to kill the larvae and other flies.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Removing the top layer of soil and replacing it with dry soil is a good idea. However, I would not cover it with plastic wrap. That will just hold moisture in, which could end up making the fungus gnat problem worse.

REPLY

DJ says

I've had them for the first time this winter. They were horrible. I was told the only thing that would work was triazicide. I didn't mix it as strong as I was told to. It helped but did not get rid of them completely. I kept all the plants in a spare bathtub. I would leave a nightlight plugged in nearby at night with a mouse sticky pad right underneath it. It was gross to see how many gnats were stuck on there every morning. I changed the pad 3 times. I still had lingering bugs so I finally repotted with fresh soil. Doing good so far although my plants look very unhealthy. I hope they pull through. They are all very sentimental plants. Thanks for your tips. I will add sand to the top of the soil.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Bummer, sorry to hear about your bad fungus gnat infestation! Good to hear you're getting them under control. Make sure you're not overwatering your plants. Overwatering is the main cause of fungus gnats, and can also cause your plants to suffer and eventually die. So be sure to keep an eye on that too.



REPLY

Mandy says

I just wanted to thank everyone for all the advice and tips in this thread! I built a brand new greenhouse this winter spring, built beautiful raised cedar planters, and filled it with a mixture of organic soils and compost... and was shocked when there were little gnats buzzing around the place in just a few days. I had NO clue that they could be in the soil! UGH! Already ordered the mosquito bits, fingers crossed it works. There are a variety of plants already growing, and the planters are so big many of the other options aren't practical.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

You're welcome, glad you found it helpful! Sorry to hear you have fungus gnats in your greenhouse, that's no fun!

REPLY

Jen says

I am SO glad to have found this post. I am just about to repot a healthy orchid and noticed, when I opened the bag, that the Miracle-Gro Orchid Mix I bought had gnats flying around. Luckily, I opened it outside, so none of them ended up in my house (I think).

After a Google search, it appears that fungus gnats and mold have been serious and ongoing issues with Miracle Grow potting soil of all types so I hesitate to use it at all.

Is it even worth treating the soil before I repot or should I just return the bag and get something else? If so, any suggestions on a quality orchid mix? The orchid in



question is store-bought Phal and I want to make sure she's happy\healthy.

Thanks

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Oh no! Sorry to hear the soil you bought at the store was infested with fungus gnats. That's so frustrating! Yes, I would definitely return it and buy an orchid potting medium instead. Orchids are epiphytic plants, which means they don't grow in dirt. The roots are there for attaching onto trees and other plants, and they don't absorb nutrients from soil. So, they don't need to be planted in potting soil like most plants do (which means no fungus gnats!!). Here's the type of soil you can buy instead... [orchid potting mix](#). And here's more information about [caring for orchids](#).

REPLY

Jen says

Thank you! I did return it.

By the way, believe it or not, the fungus gnats were in the Miracle Gro ORCHID mix (small bark, if I remember correctly). The wood was full of gnats and parts were slightly moldy, to boot. I think most of the MG "mixes" and potting soil are having this issue, according to the negative reviews.

I went to a local nursery and bought a bag from them – no issues and my repotted orchid is doing very well.

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Oh boy, that's not good. If it was infested with fungus gnats and moldy, then that orchid bark was being kept way too wet. Yuck! I'm glad you found a better quality product.



REPLY

Don Freeman says

Has anyone tried diatomaceous earth?

REPLY

Lte says

Are these remedies safe for succulents too?

REPLY

Amy Andrychowicz says

Actually, it's much easier to get rid of fungus gnats in succulents because all you have to do is let the soil dry out. Succulents grow best in dry soil. If you have gnats present, it's a sign you're overwatering, which is not good for your succulents. They also grow best in a sandy soil that doesn't contain any organic matter, so you may think about repotting them into a sandier soil mix (here's my [DIY succulent soil recipe](#)). That will get rid of the gnats for sure!

REPLY

Toni says

I don't have plants, so where the hell are they coming from? I've done the dawn in some water and have killed tons but they still keep coming.

REPLY



Amy Andrychowicz says

They could be coming in through the screens. I have potted plants right outside of my office window, and notice fungus gnats flying around in here once and a while when I have the windows open. But they can come inside even if there aren't any potted plants nearby, just from the soil outside. Just make sure they aren't fruit flies. If they are flying around in your kitchen, then those are likely fruit flies.

REPLY

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MEET AMY!

Amy Andrychowicz is an author, and the creator of Get Busy Gardening. She is devoted to helping new gardeners learn through guidance, encouragement, and advice that is easy to understand.

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