PREP WORK

Till or hand-turn the soil well in advance of planting to discourage soil insects.

Use soil solarization to reduce nematodes (microscopic worms that attack vegetable roots and reduce growth and yield).

Add organic matter to the soil to help reduce nematode populations.

Identify beneficial insects such as praying mantis, spiders, big-eyed bugs, assassin bugs, lady bugs, and all wasps.

Plant flowers in the vegetable garden.

PLANTING

Identify beneficial insects such as praying mantis, spiders, big-eyed bugs, assassin bugs, lady bugs, and all wasps.

Plant flowers in the vegetable garden.

Rotate vegetables so that the same vegetables are not planted repeatedly in the same areas.

Choose adapted varieties with resistance or tolerance to nematodes and common diseases.

Remove unproductive plants and compost or dispose of them.

Remove large insects by hand.

Do not panic and start spraying at the first sign of insect damage.

Harvest ripe crops promptly.

Monitor or scout the garden twice weekly for pest problems.

Control weeds in and around the garden because they can be a source of insects and diseases.

Keep plants growing vigorously and in a state of good health by supplying appropriate amounts of water and fertilizer.

Protect plants from cutworms by placing a collar around the plant. The collar can be made from a bottomless plastic cup or a waxed cardboard carton and should extend a few inches above and at least an inch below the surface of the ground.

NO-PESTICIDE GARDENING

For more information, please visit http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021