

# How To Make A Gnat Trap & Get Rid Of Gnats Quickly!

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## Swarm of Gnats

Before we get on to how to make a gnat trap and how to get rid of gnats, let's take a moment and learn a bit more about gnats, how they tick and where they come from.

Gnats, or to give them their Latin name Order Diptera, are small, winged insects that can cause a great deal of annoyance around the home and the garden – you've probably suffered an infestation at some time or another!

Commonly known as fruit flies, vinegar flies, or noseems, gnats can be found in all sorts of locations and there are a number of different types. The most common type of gnat found within the home is the fungus gnat. These thrive around plants and lay their eggs in the moist soil. Midgies (both biting and non-biting varieties) and gall gnats are other common species.

In the outdoor world, thousands of male gnats tend to assemble in large mating swarms, or ghosts, usually around dusk, filling the sky around them.

## What are gnats?

[Gnats](#) are small, and extremely annoying, flies that are incredibly common across the world. They can occur anywhere where there is a water source, and they particularly enjoy moist environments. One of a family of insects that includes flies and mosquitoes, gnats are tiny flies sometimes called blackflies or midges.

Although many people think that gnats are baby flies, they are actually really small adult flies, often fruit flies. As well as being the cause of much annoyance, these little critters can also be biting gnats, causing irritation to humans and pets alike.

Whilst gnats may not be the most feared household pest, they reproduce extremely quickly and infest areas in their swarms, becoming a much larger problem than you might initially suspect.



**Close up of a fungus gnat**

Whilst most gnats are harmless to humans, some gnats can also bite, often leaving painful sores and unpleasant swellings on their victims.

## Where do gnats come from?

Particularly common during warmer months, gnats are most often found around fresh produce and food, as well as moist areas such as over-watered plants and refrigerator drain trays.

Gnats can appear both indoors and outdoors and are attracted by a number of factors including:

- Drains and sinks
- Remnants of food
- Rotten fruits and decaying food
- Wet floors and damp patches
- Houseplants
- Pets

## How to know if you've got a gnat infestation...

If you notice multiple gnats flying around your home, garden, or workplace, you've almost certainly got a gnat infestation!

The good news is that, whilst these little flies may be almost impossible to swat and are notoriously difficult to get rid of, there are a number of ways to kill your gnats and reduce the risk of you falling victim to a gnat bite.

## Homemade Gnat Trap(s)

A quick and cost effective way to get rid of gnats is by using a homemade gnat trap. There are a few different types of gnat trap, allowing you to use what's in your store cupboard. Whichever trap you choose, making it is a simple process...

### Vinegar Gnat Trap

- Find a used can or jar. If you've got a mason jar, they work particularly well, but any sort of jar or can will do.
- Fill your chosen jar or can with apple cider vinegar. If you don't have any apple cider vinegar in your store cupboard, any type of vinegar will work well. If you're using white vinegar though, we'd recommend adding a couple of drops of dish soap to make it extra appealing to those gnats (they're especially fond of lemon!).
- Seal the lid, or cover with cling film if you don't have a lid, and poke several very small holes in the top using a nail or a screw.
- Leave the jar in a place that seems to be popular with your gnats (if you have more than one problem area, you can make several jars to cover multiple locations).
- The gnats will fly into the jar/gnat trap but will be unable to leave it again – dispose of the jar and your gnat problem will be a thing of the past.

### Wine and Soap Gnat Trap

- Take a small container such as a shot glass or a similar sized cup.
- Fill the container about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way full with red wine (any red wine will do, the gnats

aren't fussy!).

- Add a couple of drops of dish soap to the wine.
- Stir the mixture gently.
- Then, simply leave the mixture out and watch the gnats flock to it! The gnats will try and sit on the liquid's surface but, because the dish soap breaks the surface tension of the wine, the gnats will fall straight through and drown, making this a simple but deadly gnat trap.

If you don't want to share your red wine with the gnats, you can also make this gnat trap with vinegar rather than the wine. See the image below. Make the trap in the same way, just substitute the wine for the vinegar.



**Vinegar Gnat Trap**

## **Sticky Gnat Trap**

- Cover the front of a yellow index card, or similar sized piece of card or paper, with a thin layer of honey. The key here is making sure that the card you use is yellow as that's what attracts the gnats.
- Next, tape a chopstick, popsicle stick, or straw to the back of the card. Make sure that you don't attach it to the sticky side!
- Place the stick in the soil next to an infested plant, with the honey-coated side facing outwards. The gnats will be attracted by the yellow card and the sweet honey, and will

- become trapped in the honey.
- Once the yellow card is full of gnats, replace it with another sticky gnat trap.

## Homemade Gnat Sprays

### Gnat Soap Spray

- In a spray bottle, create a soap spray solution by mixing together 2 tbsp of liquid dish soap (lemon works best!) with 1 gallon of water. Try to avoid any dish soaps that are particularly harsh as they may damage your plants.
- Spray the soil, leaves and stems of any infested plants with the soapy solution. This should kill gnats.
- Leave the solution to settle for an hour or so, then spray the leaves and stem of the plant with clean water to rinse off the soap.

### Gnat Alcohol Spray

- In a spray bottle, mix together a small amount of alcohol (you can use rubbing or drinking alcohol, whichever you've got to hand) with water.
- To make sure that you don't damage your plants in your plight to rid them of gnats, spray one leaf with the solution and leave it to soak in for a couple of days. If the alcohol solution does not burn the leaf, the solution should be safe to use on your plants. If the leaf is burnt, try diluting the alcohol with more water and repeat the test on a different leaf.
- Spray the solution onto the affected leaves, flowers, stems, and soil every three days for two weeks, or until your gnat problem disappears.
- If you are worried about damaging your plants, you can also leave the solution in bowls near the infested plants.

## Plants

If you've got plants in and around your home, they should be your first suspect when identifying the cause of your gnat problem. Gnats love the moisture brought by the soil feeding your pot plants, particularly if you have a tendency to overwater them.

If your gnats seem to be based around your planting areas and pot plants, then they are most likely the source of the infestation. Here's how to get rid of your unwanted guests...

- Firstly, let the infested soil dry out. Gnat eggs are often laid in damp, overwatered plants as the larvae need moist conditions to grow. If you let the top 2 inches of soil dry out, the eggs and larvae should also dry out and die.
- Next, re-pot your plants. Remove them from their current pots and plant into fresh, clean pots with new soil. Make sure that you remove as much of the plant matter as possible, so

as to avoid transporting any gnats, eggs, or larvae into the new pot.

- Once you've re-potted your plants, it can be worth covering the surface of the soil with a layer of sand to try and keep the gnats out.

You should also avoid over-watering plants and drain any excess water from your plant containers, as this will almost certainly attract gnats. Additionally you can place gnats trap around the plants.

Funnily enough - you can actually plant some [plants that help to repel gnats](#) too!

## Vegetable Oil

Gnats can often appear around your drains, particularly in the kitchen. To get rid of gnats from your drains, try using vegetable oil.

- Pour  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of vegetable oil into the drain, applying it around the edge of the drain so that it glides down the pipe and clings on to the sides.
- Cover the drain with strips of clear tape to seal it off.
- After 24 hours, remove the tape. You should find that there are lots of gnats stuck to the bottom of the tape.
- Repeat until there are no longer any gnats hanging around your drains.

## Trash

Gnats are attracted to decaying organic material such as fruit and food. Ensure that you regularly take out the trash and dispose of any rotting food or fruit straight away. This will remove the gnat's food source and deter them from the area. Additionally a vinegar gnat trap can be very effective when used next to your trash cans.

You should also cover your trash cans with an air tight lid and clean them regularly.

## Fruit

As well as disposing of any rotten or decaying fruit, you should also move your fresh fruit into the refrigerator or store it in carefully sealed containers. If you leave your fruit out in the open, gnats will be attracted to it before it even starts to decay.

## Clean

No one's suggesting that your house is untidy, and gnats certainly aren't a sign of that, but if you are suffering from an infestation, it is definitely worth cleaning your house from top to bottom. This may help you to identify and eradicate the source of the problem.



In addition to this, make sure that you wash plates and dishes as soon as they are used. We're all guilty of putting them to one side whilst we get on with our lives, and returning to wash them later. But this will only serve to attract more gnats and encourage them to gather in your kitchen, so wash your dishes as soon as you've used them.

## **Doors and Windows**

Check doors and windows to make sure that they are properly sealed and that there are no gaps through which the tiny gnats can sneak into your home.

If you need to leave windows or doors open for any reason, especially in the hot weather, think about getting a fly screen with a really tight mesh. This should help to keep your home gnat free.

You should also repair any holes in screens or cracks in walls. This will help to prevent them getting in. Once again, a gnat trap can be used to help control gnats in these locations

## **Dampness**

Moist environments offer the perfect breeding ground for gnats. Check your home for damp patches and corners, these are particularly common in kitchens and bathrooms, or other rooms where there is a water source.

Regularly wipe down any damp spots you find using bleach or disinfectant and make sure that you never leave any moist towels or clothing lying around as these will attract the gnats.

## **Sinks**

To get rid of gnats quickly and prevent them from appearing in the first place, pour diluted bleach together with a few drops of dish soap down each of your drains, plug them, and leave overnight. Rinse through with clean water and then repeat each week.

## **Clothes & Body**

There are many different types of gnats, some more irritating than others. Eye gnats are particularly annoying as they tend to swarm around your face, focussing on the eyes and mouth.

Like other types of gnats, eye gnats can be very difficult to control however, if you are unfortunate enough to find yourself being tormented by the creatures, try spraying your clothes and body with a mosquito repellent (make sure it's one that contains DEET)

**Alternatively, you can make a natural gnat repellent using vanilla.**

- Take one tablespoon of vanilla and pour it into one cup of water.
- Mix together well.
- Apply to the body (this is especially useful for sensitive areas such as the eyes, nose and throat).

### **To avoid gnat bites...**

- Wear long sleeved shirts and pants when spending time near rivers, lakes, streams, and other wet areas.
- Whilst sitting on your porch, or in your yard, use a fan to blow the gnats away from you.
- Here are 3 [home remedies for mosquito bites](#), that also help gnat bites as well.

(Swarm of Gnats image from: [Joey Gannon](#) & Vinegar Gnat Trap from: [AngryJulieMonday](#))