Killing fall armyworms naturally

You can kill armyworms with natural ingredients to protect your maize.

Fall armyworms eat maize leaves. They often leave behind big holes in the leaves, and sometimes feed themselves until the maize ears. This has to be taken serious. Fall armyworms can be caterpillars, which are hiding in the maize, eggs or adults in form of moths.

Natural assistants

The nature gives farmers many assistants, which are preventing fall armyworms to destroy the maize. Those assistants are also called “farmers friends“ and are able to kill more than half of all fall armyworms. Ants, Ladybird beetles and earwigs eat fall armyworms and their eggs. Moths are eaten by birds, bats and spiders.

Pesticides are killing fall armyworms, but at the same time farmers friends. Furthermore, they don’t get into the corners. Therefore, working with natural ingredients is preferable.

Reducing fall armyworms

In the first six weeks you should destroy fall armyworms and the eggs by hand, because then the plant is the most vulnerable.

To attract the attention of ants, you can put cooking fat on the stem of the maize, when it’s knee high. After the ears start to grow, put the fat on the base and about one metre above the soil. Plant trees, wild flowers and bushes close to your field, to give your natural assistants a place to live.

Another way to reduce fall armyworms is to use a “local mix“. Therefore, you need: 1 hand full of marigold, 1 handful of young Tephrosia shoots, 1 handful of ripe chili and some aloe vera leaves.

Start with cutting all of the ingredients. Then you add 6 litres of water and the chopped ingredients to a pod and let it boil for one hour. After this you let the mixture cool down and sieve it. Then you add some snuff tobacco and stir it for about five minutes. Now you sieve it again for several times. After sieving you fill the local mix into a jug with a capacity of 5 litres and store it in the shade. On the next day you make a little hole in the cap, so that any gas can escape. Let it sit for another week. Then you can use the local mix. For one litre of the mix you use 20 litre of water, which you can use to spray on half a hectare of maize.