

Australian Pyrethrum

Flower Power : insect control as nature intended

Insects are everywhere. For every human being on Earth there are some 120 million of them, at home in infinitely varied habitats. But where human and insect paths cross, the meeting is not always a pleasant one. Flies, fleas, mosquitoes, ants, lice and ticks - just a few of the insects which bite, transmit disease, or just make life difficult. Keeping them at bay is imperative. But after the environmental and health scares of the 1960s and 70s over synthetic insecticides like DDT, there has long been a need for safe and effective insect control. The natural insecticide pyrethrum - an extract from flowers - fills that gap.

Pyrethrum : the natural alternative

The insecticidal properties of pyrethrum flowers have been known for centuries. Dried, powdered pyrethrum flowers were used traditionally as a remedy against fleas and lice, or burnt to keep flying insects away. The flowers' active ingredient is a naturally occurring oil made up of six different organic molecules - pyrethrins - that is the plant's natural defence against insects. Present in thousands of tiny oil glands in each flower head, this oil is now extracted and refined by a high tech process to produce the pure pyrethrum oil found in a wide range of insecticidal products.



Pyrethrum is different from synthetic insecticides in a number of ways:

- Very low toxicity to humans and warm blooded animals.
- Non-persistent. Pyrethrum breaks down in sunlight, and does not contaminate the environment.
- Fast acting against harmful insects.
- Insect resistance is very uncommon.

The Natural Australian Pyrethrum symbol is your guarantee of quality and safety in the insecticide products you buy.



Moreover, pyrethrum is highly effective in low volumes: pyrethrum-based household aerosols typically contain just 0.35% pyrethrum, which is enough for very rapid knockdown and kill off most flying and crawling insect pests. Pyrethrum is useful in mosquito control: at very low rates it acts as a repellent as well as disrupting mosquito behaviour, leaving the insects unable to bite and is a very effective adulticide at rates as low as 2.5g/ha. Pyrethrum garden products kill a wide range of pests on fruit and vegetables and ornamentals. Pyrethrum is commonly used for domestic pet shampoos and rinses as well as in commercial food manufacturing and storage facilities. Pyrethrum-based products are one of the few insecticides certified for use in organic farming - a meaningful measure of their safety for use in home gardens.

Natural pyrethrum : grown in Tasmania, 100% Australian

Botanical Resources Australia Pty Ltd (BRA) has been researching, growing and extracting pyrethrum in Tasmania for twenty years, and now has the most high-tech pyrethrum industry in the world. Pyrethrum used in many Australian and world products comes to you from the fertile soils of north-west Tasmania, home of Australian pyrethrum.

Synthetic insecticides : a persistent problem

Cheap, effective synthetic insecticides became widely available from the 1950s. Hailed as “wonder sprays”, chemicals such as DDT were used to combat disease-carrying insects such as fleas and mosquitoes. Synthetic insecticides certainly had their place, helping to rid many countries of the scourge of malaria. But after nearly two decades of extensive use, danger signals started to emerge. Insecticides like DDT did not break down in the environment, and after repeated use, high levels persisted.

These synthetic insecticides entered food chains, building up in wild animals as well as in humans, and were suspected of being associated with some health problems. DDT and several related chemicals were banned by many countries in the 1970s and 80s. The need for a more environmentally responsible insecticide was clear.