

## Do-It-Yourself Insect Repellents

One summer my sister got eaten alive by mosquitoes, she must have had 25 or 30 bites. This caused an overload on her immune system and now a mosquito bite raises a welt the size of a quarter on her skin. For a while she used commercial repellents but they are pretty awful, oily & chemical laden. Then someone told her that eating garlic would keep the mosquitoes away. And it's true. When you eat garlic the smell of it comes out of your pores and is a turn off to mosquitoes. Of course eating fresh garlic first thing in the day is not so easy but it turns out that garlic pills have the same effect. Normally I do not suggest pill or capsule taking. It's hard to know the quality of the herb and you don't get to taste it. Taste is often a good part of the medicine. But in this case it is a good choice. She gets the protection she needs and she only takes the pills during mosquito season.

You can also make some effective insect repellent spray. You just need:

Alcohol or witch hazel extract  
Essential oils of catnip, rosemary & lavender  
A spray bottle

Fill your spray bottle with alcohol (vodka works great) or witch hazel. (The witch hazel will be less drying to the skin.) For every 2oz of liquid add 20 drops of catnip essential oil, 10 drops of rosemary essential oil & 10 drops lavender essential oil. Shake before applying. If you find this is too drying to your skin you can add a few drops of neem or olive oil to the mixture. Not too much or it will clog up your spray nozzle. Also, do not spray directly on your face. Put it on your hand first and then apply, avoiding the sensitive area around your eyes. And always patch test, particularly if you have sensitive skin.

To keep bugs out of your home place bunches of herbs around the house in jars and in sachets. Herbs to use are: lavender, catnip, southernwood, black walnut leaves & branches.

To keep your pets free of fleas and bugs powder lavender and southernwood (and catnip for your dog) and rub them into your pet's coat and place sprigs of herbs in their sleeping areas. I DO NOT recommend using essential oils directly on pets, particularly cats. Oils are very strong medicine and it is easy to overdose your pet. You can add a couple of drops to your dog shampoo but be sure to rinse well.