

INSECT STINGS.

The Pests of Summer—Simple Remedies.

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All who go to the country in summer, and especially all campers-out, are more or less liable to be stung by insects. It is well, therefore, for every household and camp to have at hand two or three simple remedies and preventives, as much pain may be saved by their instant application.

There is a widespread impression that, of the insects which we are most likely to meet with in summer, spiders are most to be dreaded. Entomologists tell us, however that in this country but one species of spider—*Latrodectus mactans*—has been proved to be capable of inflicting a dangerous bite; and of the many reports of severe injury or even death from spider-bites, every one that has been investigated has proved to be grossly exaggerated, if not absolutely false.

The genus *Latrodectus* has representatives everywhere, but they are not likely to give trouble unless they have an opportunity to sting where the skin is very thin; upon the lip for instance. Even under these circumstances the bite will not be fatal. The degree of pain experienced will depend largely upon the state of health. Infants and delicate persons may suffer severely; robust and hardy people will generally escape more easily.

The spiders of the genus *Latrodectus* are not, as might be expected, among the largest of our spiders. Their abdomen is about the size of a pea, glossy black, and sometimes with a red spot on the under side. They live generally under logs or boards out-of-doors, and are but occasionally found in houses.

When stung by a spider try to catch the offender and send it to an entomologist for identification. Do not be alarmed because of the sting, but nevertheless, if a physician is within reach, send for him. He will probably prescribe a stimulant, and if the pain is severe and increasing, a hypodermic injection of morphia. The cases where this is necessary are, however, rare. Above all, do not be alarmed.

Bees and wasps are far more numerous than stinging spiders, and therefore are more to be dreaded, especially as many persons are extremely susceptible to the stings of these insects.

Especially to be dreaded is the sting of the large digger wasp, *Sphex speciosus*, which is often seen during July flying along with a cicada in its clutches. This wasp is fully an inch long, black, with yellow bands across the abdomen, and is ferocious to the degree when interfered with. Its sting is extremely painful.

The poison injected by bees and wasps is acid in character, and an alkaline remedy is to be applied. Common household ammonia is good; and ordinary cooking soda, moistened and applied to the sting, is even better, as one application lasts longer. Ammonia is also commonly and effectively used to alleviate the pain of mosquito stings.

In the South and Southwest "jiggers" are a source of considerable annoyance. When walking through low-growing vegetation of any kind, one is tolerably sure to brush off some of these irritating little creatures. Here prevention is better than cure; before leaving home for your walk, rub yourself with some aromatic oil—oil of clover is good—and you will not be troubled. Kerosene has been used for this purpose, in an emergency when nothing else was available, but most people would prefer the jiggers.

If the jiggers get upon you, however, the first thing to do is to refrain from scratching. Scratching kills the jiggers, but their heads remain in the skin and, aided by the scratching, make disagreeable little sores. Therefore do not scratch if you can possibly help it; rather rub in some vaseline or sweet oil, or the oil of cloves above mentioned. Sweet oil is perhaps the best, as it not only kills the jiggers but allays the irritation.

Centipedes or "thousand-legs" snare with spiders the reputation of being dangerous. As a matter of fact, all the centipedes of the Northern and Eastern United States are perfectly harmless, and as those which live in our houses destroy cockroaches and flies, they may even be considered beneficial. Some of the tropical centipedes are poisonous, and these are occasionally, though rarely, brought North in bunches of bananas; but no case of death from the sting of these tropical species is authentically reported.

With oil of cloves, sweet oil, vaseline, and common soda of ammonia, therefore, one is tolerably well fortified against the stings of summer insects. In the rare case where a spider of the genus *Latrodectus* succeeds in stinging, it is wiser to send for a physician, not to save the patient's life, which is in no danger, but in order that suffering may be relieved, if necessary, by a hypodermic injection of morphia. — Youths' Companion.