

Therapeutic Insects

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To some, insects invoke an uncomfortable feeling; phrases like creepy crawlies come to mind. But as the saying goes, don't judge a book by its cover; and so it is with insects. The ubiquitous cockroach (*Blatta orientalis* Linnaeus, *Periplaneta americana* Linnaeus, *Periplaneta P. australasiae* Fabricius) can be used to detoxify, soothe down blemishes, carbuncles and swellings, and reduce the poison if bitten by snake or insects. The cockroach is dried and the wings and feet discarded before use.



Another example is the moult of the cicada (*Cryptotympana atrata* Fabricius, *Cryptotympana C. flammatus* Distant). It has anticonvulsant and antipyretic properties. Other applications are for treating exogenous wind-heat, cough, hoarseness, rubella itch, red eyes, sore throat, swelling, and tetanus.

The dried female body *Eupolyphaga sinensis* Walker or *Steleophaga plancyi* (Boleny) (Ground Beetle) can be used to cure bruises, dislocated bone, fractured tendon, amenorrhea, and tumour. Ge *et al.* (2012) had tested the ethanol extract of *E. sinensis* and found it to be effective in treating liver cancer in mice. Solitary bee such as *Osmia rufa* Linnaeus or Carpenter bee (*Xylocopa dissimilis* (Lepeletier)) can reduce phlegm, sore throat, and body heat. *Gryllulus chinensis* Weber (cricket) when boiled with hot water and then dried is effective as diuretic and to treat impotence.

As man is beset by threats of emerging new diseases and antibiotic resistance, the traditional practices may offer new cures. The scientific validation with more sophisticated tools can help the understanding of the underlying mechanisms of the therapeutic properties of insects that can be used by mankind.

