

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

Bedbugs

by Yvonne Salcido, M.H.



I love animals just like most of you, but bedbugs are not my favorite of the animal kingdom. There has been much coverage the last few months on bedbugs in the media. Several states are having significant problems having an economic impact on the citizens and local government. Yet this problem is not new. People have been sleeping with bedbugs for centuries. Hence the saying "sleep tight don't let the bedbugs bite".

Shortly after World War II, the pest in America and Western countries was virtually annihilated with toxic chemicals such as DDT. However, they continued to flourish in less developed nations. Reported infestations in the U. S. have increased 500% since the 1990's. All 50 states have reported infestations, and this is not just a lower income problem. Bedbugs don't know the difference between anyone's tax bracket; they just need a host. Many five star hotels, theaters, and upper end retail stores have had to shut their doors to deal with extermination.

So why are they back? We have created an environment for them to flourish! Many people travel the globe more than any generation before us. Detection and prevention are critical, but you must know what to look for. You can't fight an enemy you don't even know is lurking about. Here are a few guidelines and home remedies that could help in the battle with these pesky pests.

Are they Dangerous? Bedbugs:

- Feed on our blood
- Can cause inflammation
- Can cause itchiness
- Can cause infection
- According to doctors, have no evidence of transmitting disease, but they do carry 24 different pathogens, so it makes me wonder if this is true.

Prevention:

- Bedbugs like clutter and crevices. While you probably can't remove all clutter, keeping things clean does help.
- Vacuum often
- Use hot water to clean clothes in washer (heat and freezing kills)

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- Dry clothes in the dryer (again heat kills)
- Use sheets that cover mattress completely (you can get plastic covers that cover entire mattress and pillows)
- When traveling be careful where you put your suitcase – it is best to put in the closet

Do you have bedbugs in your home? Proper detection is key – look for:

- Blood stains on clothing or sheets (from bites, itching)
- Black spots that look almost like mold on mattress, sheets, or furniture
- Bites patterns of three (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), which can be mistaken for mosquito bites
- Bedbugs look like lentil or apple seeds, are reddish brown in color, and are very close to a jalapeño seed in size.
- Prefer humans (but will take any mammal typically mice or birds)
- Go through 5 different stages of molting (go to www.epa.gov/pesticides/bedbugs/index.html to view the different stages)

Elimination: They do have electronic monitoring devices and trapping devices available now. You can also eliminate bedbugs using heat or freeze methods. You can find many companies that use these methods. To eliminate by heat they bring in huge heaters, seal up the house and basically cook the inside of your home.

The freeze method uses Cryonite (this is liquid carbon dioxide, in minus degrees). This is food safe – it has no chemicals. The EPA warns against companies using pesticides that are not to be used indoors. Of course we don't ever want to use toxic chemicals. Bedbugs are attracted to the smell of carbon dioxide (that is what we breathe out, and we do so in larger amounts while sleeping).

Here are some herbs that repel bedbugs: Black Walnut, Eucalyptus, Garlic, Lavender, Black Cohosh, Cayenne, Mint, Lavender, Guyabano, Thyme and Neem.

Traveling: Before travelling make some herbal sachets that repel bedbugs. Take 4 along with you - leave two in your suitcase (so you don't take pests home), then place one under your bed and one on your bed. Eat plenty of garlic while traveling - it will keep you from getting food poisoning and repel other creatures you wouldn't want to bring home.

Herbal Sachet: (use cut herbs) this not only has bedbug repelling herbs, but will be pleasantly aromatic - 3 parts Black Walnut, 3 parts Thyme, 2 parts Sweet Flag, 1 part Lavender, 1 part Mint.

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