


Chillies as an Insecticide

Chillies can also be used as an insecticide. They act as a stomach poison, stop the pests feeding and act as a repellent to a number of pests. The chemicals that act as an insecticide in chillies are highest in the ripe fruit especially in the skin and seed.

A spray can be made from chillies. Soak ground chillies overnight in cold water and filter the solution through a cloth and spray it on infected plants, or sprinkle it with a whisk of twigs or grass. Dilute the mixture in an equal amount of soapy water made by using bar soap to make it more effective. Too strong a mixture causes burning of the leaves, so the right strength should be found by testing.



Dried chilli powder can also be a very effective insecticide for controlling insects like aphids on vegetables, though it is not easy to work with because it irritates. It can also be applied round the base of crops to repel pests.

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CHILLI OINTMENT

Around the world Chilli Peppers are used to treat rheumatism and arthritis. The active substance is called *capsaicine*.

Hard physical work often brings tired and aching muscles. With old age, joints and muscles start to ache. Those in rural areas do not have good access to medication, but can in most places find chilli peppers for making an effective ointment.



Chilli ointment is the most convenient way of helping even the poor in the community because they grow wild and the ointment does not need much money to make. Chillies are often just left for birds to feed on.

Equipment Needed:

You require the following items:

- Well dried and pounded chilli peppers (*Capsicum frutescens*)
- A good vegetable oil of the type easily found in the market.
- Beeswax or candles.
- A stove or fire place.

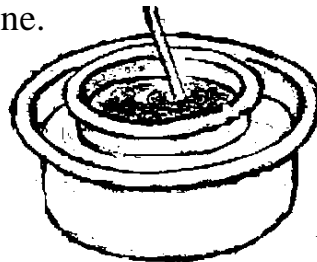
- 2 cooking pots, one small and one large so that the smaller one easily fits inside the large one.
- 3 small stones of the same size.
- A stick or wooden spoon for stirring the oil.
- Water.
- A drinking glass (for measuring the oil)
- A sieve or filter cloth and pegs if they are available
- Small containers to put the ointment in, e.g. film containers.



Chilli ointment is made by heating chilli powder into hot, but not boiling, oil, then later dissolving beeswax or candles in the mixture.

Making the Chilli Ointment

- Light the fire or stove
- Half fill the big pan with water and then put it on the fire to boil.
- Measure four glasses of oil and pour it into the smaller pan.
- Measure one glass full of well dried and pounded chilli and add it to the oil
- Arrange the three stones in the bottom of the larger pan so that they will support the small one.
- Put the smaller pan into the hot water, taking care not to get any water into the oil. This is called a water bath.
- Bring the water back to the boil.



- Continue to heat the oil and plant material in this way for two hours after the water has started to boil.
- Stir the mixture every 10 or 15 minutes.
- After two hours take the pans off the heat.
- Remove the small pan with the oil taking care not to get any water into the oil.
- Filter the mixture through a clean filter cloth or a sieve.
- Squeeze the chillis in the sieve to ensure that you collect all the valuable medicinal oil.
- To produce a solid ointment, dissolve one glass of melted beeswax wax or four candles to the filtered oil.
- Heat the mixture again in the water bath. Make sure that no water goes into the ointment. Keep on stirring for another 3 to 5 minutes.
- Once the wax has melted, remove the wicks then pour the oil into the containers and replace the lids immediately.
- Leave the oil to settle for 30 minutes to one hour.
- The oil is then ready for use.

Remember the ratio should be 1 glass chilli to 4 glasses of cooking oil

To use the ointment, massage the area of pain vigorously until it almost causes pain. Do not use on broken skin. Keep the joint warm. Take great care not to get the ointment in your eyes or any open place.