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# Pre-membership Course in Medical Homeopathy

A Blended Open-Learning Course in Homeopathic Medicine for Healthcare Professionals

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**Unit 61**  
*Materia medica Studies*

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## *Insect Remedies*

Given the millions of insect species in existence, with their niche behaviours and habitats, the insect remedies are relatively unexplored in homeopathy.

Nevertheless, those few that have a long heritage of use also have well established clinical pictures and they tend to come from species whose defences involve quite specific toxins with characteristic clinical pictures.



Those in this category that you already know well include:

*Apis mellifica* and *Cantharis vesicularis*, with their characteristic local signs and symptomatology.

From a practical point of view you should take some time to review the traditional clinical pictures for these and, in addition, two other well established insect remedies:

***Formica rufa*** (Ant) whose clinical picture is dominated by the formic acid in their secretions. <https://youtu.be/mTSap1R60Xg>

***Coccus cacti*** (Cochineal insect) whose clinical picture is an archetype for many other insect remedies. <https://youtu.be/VYffA9sWgeE>

Some cases of Covid-19, in whom the viral load has led to damage in both respiratory and non-respiratory organs, should be considered for treatment with Cocc-c. (Esp. chronic mucoid cough and renal complications)

Overleaf, we have included excerpts from Clarke's *Materia medica* entries on these latter two remedies for you to look over.

Some overarching themes for insect remedies are listed overleaf. These themes are not yet a matter of consensus in the homeopathic community. Nevertheless, from time to time you may see a convergence of signs, symptoms and behavioural characteristics that brings an insect remedy into focus. In some of these cases the final decider may lie in the local behaviour of lesions in the skin, mucus membranes, synovium etc.

It is worth noting that potentised *Formica rufa* is available as an injection. It is sometimes used in Integrative Rheumatology services as a local treatment for tenosynovitis or capsular pain, particularly in the shoulder joint.

Various traditions have also used *Apis mellifica* as an active treatment in the inflammatory arthritides, including bee sting venom for acute joint swelling.

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## Themes Common in Insect Remedies

- **Busy, active, restless, industrious, organised**
- Ambitious, acquisitive, materialistic, showy, wealth and status
- **Change**, improvement, develop, to make something of themselves
- Feeling small, powerless, insulted, humiliated, taken advantage of
- Squished, crushed, stepped on, squashed, trampled, downtrodden
- Dirty, ugly, repulsive, disgusting, no good, cheap, low, degraded
- Desire for a more elevated less lowly existence, dreams of taking flight

## Symptoms Common in Insect Remedies

- **Suffocated, constricted, oppressed in the throat or chest**
- **Itching, crawling, prickling skin**
- Buzzing, vibrating in the body
- **Urinary tract symptoms, irritation of genitals**
- Burning, stinging, stabbing pain
- Hoarseness of voice, aversion to fluids
- Appetite, hunger,
- Worse from heat, better in the open air, better from cold applications

If you are interested in studying the Insect remedy group in more detail, the following links make reference to a wider range of individual species and provide some information of the similarities and differences between the different groups and the spider remedies that you studied earlier.

<https://www.homeobook.com/homeopathic-remedies-from-insects/>

<http://www.interhomeopathy.org/comparing-insect-remedy-and-spider-remedy-themes>

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**Formica rufa.** The Ant. N. O. Hymenoptera.

Tincture from crushed live ants. Contains formic acid (HCO, OH).

Clinical. Apoplexy. Brain, affections of. Bruises. Chorea. Cough. Diarrhoea. Dislocations. Dropsies. Eyes, affections of. Facial paralysis. Foot-sweat, checked, consequence of. Gout. Hair, falling out. Headaches. Nodes. Overlifting, complaints from. Paralysis. Rheumatism. Sight, affections of. Spine, affections of. Spleen, pain in. Throat, sore.



Characteristics. Formica causes many rheumatic and gouty pains; the pains appear suddenly, and dart from place to place: left, then right; right, then left. The spinal cord is affected, paralyzes and spasms occurring. Sensation as if brain too heavy and large. Sensation as if a bubble burst in forehead. It is of use "in all kinds of apoplectic diseases. It strengthens the brain" (Hering).

Cooper has given the 3x with success in cases of weakness of lower extremities. J. W. Thomson (H. P., xvi. 32) reports the case of a gentleman, aged 84, who had severe neuralgic pains between posterior of right ear and centre of occiput. From this he apparently recovered. Eighteen months later he returned with a steady, sore, and burning pain in same region; swollen and tender around, but especially behind, right ear. He could only sleep in one comfortable position, which he could not describe, but only knew when he found it; and he must be covered up warmly behind right ear and between that and occiput and neck-all right side. Better from taking right hand and rubbing gently behind right ear. Sweat afforded no relief; the whole head seemed to sympathise with the distress; he had dribbling of urine.

Formica rufa was given, six doses, one before each meal. On the second day, towards evening, he felt worse, and on the third day there were twinges and spasms of severe pain in addition to the sore pain which he had before experienced. These gradually got better, and on the fourth day even the soreness was much better. The main thing, however, was that he felt mentally better; said his mind and head felt stronger, and from feeling depressed he had become cheerful, and life did not seem the burden it had for some time past. Hering gives as an indication for Formic acid: "Burning pain, burning from washing; renewed burning from cold washing." Symptoms are > after midnight. Motion pain in neck. > By rubbing; by combing hair. Cold water application < (headache; burning pains). Great liability to take cold; consequences of cold and wet; cold bathing; damp weather. Clammy skin; disagreeable sweat during night; sweat without relief.

Relations: Compatible: After Cham. Compare: Ars., Bry., Dulc. (rheumatism); Urt. u. (nettle-rash; gout; rheumatism. Nettles contain Formic acid); Frag. v. (lack of mammary secretion); Tromb. (diarrhoea); Caps. (burning pains < by cold water).

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## SYMPTOMS *Formica rufa*

1. Mind. Want of memory; in evening.-Indisposed, morose, fearful, apprehensive.-Exhilarated after pain in vertex abated.-Mind unusually excited.-Remarkable and unexpected activity of mind during the day, with absence of usual dulness and sleepiness.

2. Head. Vertigo; all things seem to move to and fro, and reeling of body; pain in l. supra-orbital region when going to bed, with dizziness; blackness before eyes, > by sitting down.-Fulness; stupid feeling, with sensation of stiffness in neck.-Dulness; pressure on both sides between temples and ears.-Fore part of head aches with the cough.-Sensation like a bubble bursting in forehead, running around l. side of head.-Headache in l. forehead and temple back to occiput, with cutting extending into ear.-Headache with cracking in l. ear, followed by pain in l. temple, then in vertex with nausea and abatement of pain in forehead.-Pain on top of head, shifting from epigastrium.-In morning, headache in posterior, upper and inner part of head; < drinking coffee; each time during and after washing with cold water.-Pain from neck up to back of head.-Sensation running up into head from body like lightning.-Headache, < sitting up in bed; > after combing hair.-Itching of scalp.-Hair ceases falling out.-Contusions of head.

3. Eyes. Pain in l. supra-orbital and l. temporal region, the seat of pain being tender to touch; pain and aching over l. eye; objects appear as if seen through a mist; blackness before eyes, must sit down for a few moments.-Pain in eye when awakes, > by washing.-Dim sight.-Flickering before eyes.-Nebula; leucoma; pterygium.-Maculae and ulcers on cornea.-Rheumatic ophthalmia.-Spasmodic twitching of upper eyelid (r).

4. Ears. Ringing buzzing in ears.-Cracking in l. ear with headache.-Deafness.-External sensitiveness of r. ear and temple.

6. Face. Entire l. side of face and cheek feel as if paralysed.

9. Throat. Sore throat in morning, with much mucus.-Sore throat < l. side.

11. Stomach. Pain in neck when hawking and gargling; when eating and drinking, esp. when closing jaws.-After drinking tea copious sweat.-Nausea and vomiting; with diarrhoea; in evening; with cough.-Burning pain in stomach, with oppression and weight.-Constant pressure at cardiac end of stomach, and a burning pain there.

12. Abdomen. Dull pain in region of spleen.-Sensation across abdomen as if bruised below navel, also tired feeling in back.-Flatulence.-Hardening of mesenteric glands.

13. Stool and Anus. Diarrhoea after meals, or only during day, not at night; or day and night, or before midnight.-Diarrhoea with tenesmus; pain in

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bowels before stool.-Loose diarrhoeic stool, with feeling as if more was to pass.-White stools.-Constipation and sensation of constriction in sphincter.-Pressure in rectum, < evening and in bed.-Painful desire in anus and rectum for stool, which, however, will not pass.-Tape-worm.

14. Urinary Organs -Paralysis of bladder.-Double the quantity of urine, even at night; increased for two or three days.-Urine like saffron; bright yellow; no sediment; passed frequently.

15. Male Sexual Organs -Long-lasting erections after urinating in morning.-Seminal emissions.-Scanty ejaculation with incomplete erection.

16. Female Sexual Organs. Menses scanty and pale, with bearing-down pains in back third day; fourth day darker; crampy pain through hip-joint and pelvis.-Menses appear eight days too soon.-Lack of milk with nursing women.

17. Respiratory Organs. Hoarseness with sore throat.-Small piece of phlegm in throat, which cannot be brought up by coughing.-Cough tedious and long lasting; < at night and from motion; with an aching in forehead and a constrictive pain in chest.-Violent attacks of cough, with vomiting, day and night.

18, 19. Chest and Heart. Pleuritic pains.-Uneasy pain in region of heart.-Fluttering palpitation.-Violent penetrating pain in region of r. nipple.-Violent prickling pressing stitches in region of l. nipple, later on l. side of back, but more violent; still later the same sensation on other parts of the body.

20. Neck and Back. Soreness in neck and up into head.-Severe, pain l. side of neck while chewing.-Stiffness l. side of neck extending down l. arm; < by least motion; turn, or twist; > by application of a hot iron.-Severe pain across sacrum and dorsum of each hand.-Affection of spinal cord.

21. Limbs. Sensation as if muscles were strained and being torn from attachment.-Rheumatism appearing suddenly, mostly in joints, with restlessness; patients desire motion, although it < pains; > by pressure; sweat without relief; < r. side.-Stiffness and contraction of joints.

22. Upper Limbs. Itching in armpits in morning.-Pain from neck down l. arm; in evening to r.; could scarcely move her arm.-Severe pain above r. elbow.

23. Lower Limbs. Severe pain through pelvis as if from one acetabulum to the other.-Bruised pain in hips at night, causing him to change from side to side.-Chronic gout.-Checked foot-sweat (chorea from).

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26. Sleep. All night dry throat, woke her out of sleep.-Disagreeable sweat during night, awoke with clammy skin.-Could get to sleep if she could get the right position.-Wakes early, and feels she has had sufficient sleep.-On awaking: headache; vomiting with headache; pain in eyes; stitches in ears.

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### ***Coccus Cacti.***

Cochineal. N. O. Hemiptera.

An insect infesting cactus plants. The dried bodies of the female insects are used for making a tincture or trituration. They also constitute a well-known dye. (*Coccus Cacti* has sometimes been confounded with *Coccinella septempunctata*, both insects being known as "Cochenille" in French.)



Clinical. Asthma. Backache. Catarrh. Gonorrhoea. Gravel. Haemorrhages. Heart, affections of. Impotence. Irritation. Labia, inflammation of. Menorrhagia. Nephritis. Phthisis. Spasms. Tinnitus. Uric acid diathesis. Whooping-cough.

Characteristics. *Coccus cacti* acts more especially on mucous membranes. It compares with *Cantharis* in its action on the renal organs, and with *Cactus* in causing haemorrhages, in disturbing the heart and in causing lancinating, stitching, and pricking sensations. Itching, sticking and biting in various parts of the skin; red spots and itching pimples. Sensations of irritation predominate, especially in throat and respiratory organs, eyes and urino-genital organs. In the throat there is a sensation as if a hair or crumb were lodged behind larynx, and as if a thread were hanging down the back of the throat causing a cough. Haemorrhages are apt to be in large black clots, especially haemorrhages from kidneys and uterus. Lancinating pains and itching of glans penis, symptoms of the passage of small calculi. The cough exactly corresponds to the whooping-cough type, there is no remedy which has a wider range in this affection. "Cough < in morning; the child awakens and is immediately seized with a paroxysm of coughing ending in vomiting clear, ropy mucus hanging in long strings from the mouth," Hoarseness. Fatigue of vocal organs. Violent tickling in larynx. Stitching and ulcerating pains below clavicles, especially left. Peculiar sensations are: As if a ball or stone lying in stomach; raging pain as though a fluid were injected into a small blood-vessel; as if something ascending towards stomach; as of mucus ascending and descending trachea; as of a plug of mucus moving in chest; as if head would split. Kunkel records the case of a man, 75, an who had suffered from nocturnal enuresis up to the age of seven. When almost 20 he frequently passed large quantities of uric acid, and at the same time he began to have symptoms of chronic catarrh of the colon, frequent scanty stools, much mucus, cross humour, itching anus, threatening of piles but no bleeding. Insomnia soon followed. *Coc. c.* 2 and 3 was given without benefit. *Aqua calcis* did some good but not much. In three successive years he was sent to Carlsbad with good result to the intestinal catarrh, but the sleeplessness was untouched. Gradually all kinds of arthritic symptoms developed, especially in knees. There was occasionally considerable flow of urine, and the more copious it was the better the patient slept, and the less pain in the joints. The same relief followed an attack of diarrhoea. Four weeks at Assmanhausen caused the excretion of large quantities of uric acid one year, but had no effect the next, and the knee got worse. Wiesbaden did good one year and none the next. Half a tumbler of *Kronenquelle* water drunk every morning did good to the knee and enabled him to walk better



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than he had done for a long time. In three or four years the excretions of uric acid had ceased and the patient's state grew worse: insomnia recurred, diarrhoea became much more frequent. A fortnight previous to such attack, patient noticed he had great aversion to butcher's meat. Coc. c. 30 gtt. i. morning and evening was given. Gradually sleep returned. There was almost daily excretion of uric acid, sometimes in the form of large shot; the diarrhoea ceased and the patient went about his work with pleasure. Berridge cured with Coc. c. a case of gonorrhoea, guided by the symptom: "Excruciating pain in left iliac region extending to groin and halfway down thigh, as if a fluid were forcing its way there."

There is general sensitiveness to touch and pressure; rinsing mouth or brushing teeth causes cough and vomiting. Warmth < most symptoms; cough < entering warm room; throat < by warmth of bed. Tickling in trachea and cough > open air. Teeth very sensitive to cold. Catarrh < on slightest exposure. Catarrh from autumn till warm weather. Symptoms < night and early morning; cough < on waking. Symptoms are often periodic. The symptoms are < lying down. But the least exertion causes lassitude and tendency to perspire or cough, < during exercise. Mental exertion < pain in occiput. Rising up = haemorrhage with passage of large clots from uterus.

Relations. Compare: Canth., Cact., Ocim. can., Sars.; apices of lungs sore, tenacious mucus, Kali bi. Many of the Cactus symptoms -pricking and sticking pains, heart disturbances, &c.-reappear in the pathogenesis of this Cactus-fed insect.

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## SYMPTOMS *Coccus cacti*

1. Mind. Ill-humoured, irritable, apprehensive.
2. Head. Giddiness; the head feels dull (pressive headache, also in frontal region), as if he had drunk too much, with a white-coated tongue.-Congestion of blood to the head when entering a warm room; > in the open air.-Throbbing, pressing, or sticking pains in temples.-Violent raging pain extending from r. eye along squamous portion of temporal bone on its inner side to occiput; it seems as though a fluid were injected paroxysmally into a small blood-vessel.-Sensation as though a hot constricting band extended from one mastoid process across occiput to the other; this region seemed tense and constricted; the condition became worse, until at last it affected the whole skull, in which the pain seemed to fix itself, and it seemed as though the bones became drawn closer and closer together; the whole scalp was also involved and seemed to be drawn tighter about the skull.
3. Eyes. Sensation as if a foreign body were lodged between the eyelid and the eye.-Sensation as if the edges of the eyelids were swollen.-Conjunctivitis; increased lachrymation.
4. Ears. Sudden violent stitch in l. internal ear, extending into l. side of neck and into sternum.-Intolerable itching in l. ear.-Tickling and itching in ears.-Cracking in ears on swallowing.-Great roaring in ears as from a storm.
5. Nose. Dryness of the nose, with inclination to sneeze.-Swelling of nose, with itching, violent sneezing, and increased secretion of mucus.-Redness on the edges of the nostrils.-Crusts (yellow) on the edges of the nostrils.
6. Face. Crawling sensations in the face.
7. Teeth. Sensation as if cold air were blown on the teeth.-Great soreness of the teeth to contact.-Drawing and jerking pains in teeth; teeth sensitive to cold things.-Loud speaking or brushing teeth causes cough and vomiting.
8. Mouth. Sweetish, metallic taste in the mouth (with accumulation of water in the mouth).-Taste: metallic; bitter; sweetish; sour.-Dry, brown-coated tongue.-Mouth and tongue dry, with much thirst.-Burning in mouth and throat.-Rawness of mouth and throat.-Stitches and burning in the throat and on the tongue.-Great sensitiveness of mouth and fauces, so that rinsing of the mouth caused cough and vomiting of thick masses of mucus.-Sensation as if the palate were elongated, with continuous hawking.-The arches of the palate are very irritable.
9. Throat. Swelling of the tonsils, with continuous desire to swallow, and sensation as if a plug were lodged in the throat.-Swelling and redness of r. tonsil.-Dryness and burning in throat and fauces.-Rawness and scraping in

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throat, with expectoration of mucus.-Sensation as if uvula were elongated, causing constant hawking.-Throat symptoms < from warmth, esp. in bed.-Difficult deglutition.

10. Appetite. Desire to eat often and much at a time; much thirst.-After dinner much thirst, and when he drinks water then chill.-Sensation of hunger, with colic.-Canine hunger.

11. Stomach. Spasmodic empty eructations.-Heartburn.-Sensation as if something indigestible were lying in the stomach.-Nausea and vomiting; vomiting of mucus.-Retching; inclination to vomit.-Distension of stomach.-Heaviness and pressure in stomach; sticking pains.-Stitches in the pit of the stomach when inhaling.-Epigastric region sensitive to touch.

12. Abdomen. Fulness in the abdomen, as if he had eaten too much, with swelling and tenderness of the pit of the stomach.-Pains in l. hypochondrium, as from incarcerated flatulence; pains extend to l. side of back and lumbar vertebrae.-Burning drawing in region of spleen.-Flatulent distension of abdomen, with much rumbling.-Gripping in abdomen followed by diarrhoea.

13. Stool and Anus. During stool, burning in rectum; stitches in rectum.-Itching in anus, with tenesmus from slight exertion.-Stitch from the anus, extending into the urethra.-Copious, soft or pasty stools.

14. Urinary Organs. Stitches extending from the kidneys through the urethra into the bladder.-Dull, pressive pain and soreness in region of kidneys.-Pressure in bladder.-Spasmodic pain in the bladder, with alternate coldness and heat.-Itching at the end of the urethra.-Stitches and itching in urethra.-Burning pain in urethra while urinating.-Frequent and great desire to urinate.-Great desire to urinate in the morning (with erection).-Frequent micturition.-Frequent and copious urination, urine clear as water.-Red sediment like brickdust.-The discharge of urine is slow, in small quantities, with violent burning pain.

15. Male Sexual Organs. Genitals hot, red, swollen.-Frequent erections, with increased desire.-Lascivious mood, nocturnal emissions.-Loss of sexual power with constant dull burning pains in l. hypochondrium and pains across loins as if broken.

16. Female Sexual Organs. Swelling and heat of pudenda.-Soreness of vulva; cannot bear pressure of clothing.-Inflammation of labia.-Great tenderness and irritation in extreme lower part of vagina, < when urinating; can walk a long distance, but is < after sitting in the house all day.-Menses too early; too profuse; and last too long. Haemorrhage from uterus, with passage of large clots, which escape when quiet, or when getting up to pass water.-Enormous black clots pass from vagina.-Mucous leucorrhoea, preceded by drawing, thrusting pain in inguinal, vesical, and pubic regions.

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17. Respiratory Organs. Fatigue of the vocal organs, even after speaking without exertion; the voice becoming rough and hoarse; respiration somewhat laborious.-Scraping sensation in the throat.-Hawking and coughing, with increased thirst.-The bronchial tubes are loaded with mucus.-Rawness in air-passages, causing cough.-Sensation of a crumb the size of a walnut sticking behind the larynx, obliging him to swallow constantly.-Whooping-cough; nightly, periodical attacks of cough from tickling in the larynx, ending with expectoration of a large quantity of viscid, stringy mucus.-Morning cough (6 am.); first barking, dry cough, followed by expectoration of viscid mucus; the difficult expectoration causes retching and vomiting.-Cough with expectoration of viscid, stringy, yellow, sour-tasting or reddish mucus.-Cough, in a warm room; > in a cold room.-Short paroxysms of cough, followed by easy expectoration of globules of mucus.

18. Chest. Burning under the sternum.-In the chest sensation of heat, of soreness.-Oppression and soreness in chest.-Stitches and sticking pains in sides of chest.

19. Heart and Pulse. Pressive pain in precordial region.-Sensation as if everything were pressed towards the heart.-Heavy pressure in the region of the heart.-Irregular beating and palpitation of the heart, with anxiety after eating.-Pulse accelerated.

20. Back. Stitches between the shoulders.-Bruised pain in small of back and region of kidneys.-Violent pressive pain in region of kidneys.

21. Limbs. Drawing, tearing pains in the limbs.

22. Upper Limbs. Sensation as if a fine glass splinter were sticking in the tips of the fingers, under the nails.

23. Lower Limbs. Violent stitches in r. hip-joint.-Hot swelling of the knees.

24. Generalities. Great weariness and prostration.-Itching and prickling sensations in the skin.

26. Sleep. Irresistible desire to sleep.-Great sleepiness (after dinner). Vivid dreams.-Uneasy, restless sleep, interrupted by vivid dreams.-Frequent awaking during the night, with excitement, as if he had taken too much coffee.

27. Fever. Chilliness all day; cold feet in the morning, with perspiration of the whole body.-Chilliness all over the body, esp. in the afternoon and evening.-Increased warmth of body.-Greatly overpowered by moderate heat.-Chilliness in the evening, with heat in the head, followed by general heat, and then perspiration all night, which relieves.-Perspiration when walking; on the lower extremities; in the morning.

