



Insects

The insecta is one of the most important and largest classes of the kingdom animalia, both in number of species and in total biomass. They play a vital role in the ecology of the planet. They are necessary to the fertilization and thus propagation of many species of plant. At the other end of the life cycle they help to clear away and process both the waste products of life and the remains that are left after death. Insects are often pests and parasites and vectors for disease, though they are just as often important natural forms of pest control. They are the regulators of balance in our world responding very quickly to changed conditions and so bringing them back into equilibrium.

Until now, Insect Remedies have not played the role in homeopathy that their role in the wider world suggests they should. We have but a handful of classical remedies from the class of insects and these are best known for their therapeutic and acute effects and little used constitutionally. Insects are a massive group of creatures that are to be found in all aspects of our daily experience. Yet they have not, as a group, sufficiently come to the awareness of the homeopathic community. They are rarely used and rarely proved.

One of the key features of the life cycle of insects is change and transformation. There is a complete change that occurs during pupation in many insects, most spectacularly in the butterflies. However, all insects undergo less dramatic transformations several times during their larval stages. In homeopathy we recognize that a great deal of disease comes out of a response to change that is inadequate or inappropriate. It makes sense that the substances most strongly associated with change should make important remedies.

Jeremy Sherr, in his proving of Damsel fly, notes his belief that the insect remedies are very important in acute conditions. Most information on the therapeutic and acute use of remedies comes more from folk and medical traditions rather than from proving data. With the plant remedies this information is preserved in many herbals. There is no such comprehensive record for animals and particularly for insects. It would be extremely useful if what records there are could be analyzed and if this were borne in mind by anyone who proves an insect remedy.

Another feature of insects is the way in which “they are what they eat”. Insects tend to be quite choosy in what they eat, many have very specific host plants and they tend to assimilate, concentrate and integrate chemicals, particularly toxins, which they obtain from their food. Insect remedies can, therefore, be concentrated and modified versions of the remedies that come from their host plants. These can be more effective and more precise than the plant remedies themselves.

More generally the insect remedies encompass a number of themes that are of particular importance in the modern industrial world. These include: a world that feels as if it is in a state of constant and sudden change; work, industriousness, ambition and laziness; issues around food and weight; feelings of being repulsive or disgusting, small and worthless and a demand to be recognized, valued and admired; a stress on appearance and superficiality; a view of the world that encompasses dirt, corruption and pollution and perhaps ultimate destruction; sexuality and confusion of sexual identity, conflict between individuality and conformity, and dependence and independence; and responses that involve irritation and anger. It is hard to believe that a group of remedies with these properties is not of great importance in modern homeopathy.

We need to remember that the remedies we use correspond to the difficulties our patients are experiencing. These difficulties are usually distasteful or toxic and the indicated remedies are more likely to come from substances that are also distasteful or toxic. Just as in the wider world we need to overcome some of our disgust and start to respect and preserve the insect world more than we have done; so in the homeopathic world we need to honor and nurture insect remedies in the way that the contributors to this issue have done.

Peter Fraser, Guest Editor

Peter Fraser is the author of “The AIDS Miasm” and of a series of introductory books which include volumes on Birds and Insects. He has coordinated and collated many provings. He and Caroline Dent will be responsible for continuing the work of the Vancouver Homeopathic Academy from the Fall of 2011.