Watch Out for the Chiggers!

Quite a few of you have asked me this year for a remedy for chigger bites.

I must confess, I had never heard of chiggers until about ten years ago. Perhaps they are more of a Southern thing, and I just wasn't exposed to them in New York.

But now that I'm in Florida and it would appear I am going to get to know them better.

Technically, they are called *Trombiculidae* – so yes, "chiggers" is much easier to pronounce. Some of you may also know them as red bugs, berry bugs or harvest mites.

Not actually insects, they are arachnids (members of the spider/mite family). They live in forests, woodlands, grassy areas – anywhere there is low, decaying, damp vegetation.

In their larval stage, they climb aboard unsuspecting humans, burrow a tiny hole into the skin and inject a

digestive enzyme to break down a small amount of skin for the little nuisance to eat. Those little attacks leave behind lesions, rashes and extreme itching as their calling card.

Even though they have a funny name, they are no joke.

A member of my staff recalled being warned about them when she was a little girl. Her grandfather would rake all the pine straw and leaves on his property into huge piles to use as mulch.

Those mountains of vegetation were tempting to a little girl who wanted to run and jump headlong into the pile! But her family urged her not to with a simple, “Watch out for the chiggers!”

How she was supposed to “watch out” for them is rather laughable, as they are practically microscopic (or at least require a powerful magnifying glass to see). I think instead, her parents were politely trying to say, “Don’t you dare jump in that pile, young lady!”

Frankly, the only way to “watch out” for chiggers is to avoid the areas they frequent, but in the summertime when playing outdoors, that’s pretty hard to do.

And you know from last week’s blog post on the dangers of pesticides, I am not about to systemically poison my surroundings to kill a microscopic predator I can avoid instead.

As life would have it, though, there are times you just can’t avoid certain things, no matter how hard you try!

Sometimes, merely a slow walk on a golf course can result in picking up a community of microscopic chiggers (especially if you’re a golfer who ends up under the trees more than on the fairway).

So, what can we do *after* we've become a buffet for these teensy red bugs? Why, homeopathy, of course!

A good baseline for any bite (puncture wound) is *Ledum 200*, twice a day.

If the itching is over-the-top maddening, then our next line of attack would be *Antimonium crud 200* mixed together in the mouth with *Arsenicum album 200*, twice a day (maybe even three times a day, depending on the crazy-making level of the itching).

This is a Banerji Protocol combination that works beautifully for a lot of itching conditions. (It's important to expand our thinking as we learn to use homeopathic protocols. For instance, if this remedy works well for one itching condition, it is an excellent place to start when faced with another itching condition. So, remember this one!)

If the itching is so severe it awakens the person at night, then *Coffea 200* twice a day is an effective addition (with the second dose being timed for right before bedtime).

Let's face it unless you carry a microscope into the backyard, you're not going to be able to "Watch out for the chiggers!" If you are unsuccessful in avoiding them, it's best to be prepared to relieve their aftermath with homeopathy.

Warmly,

Joette

P.S. Speaking of expanding your thinking as you learn about different remedies, a perfect place to start is having a *materia medica* front-and-center in your homeopathy library.

Most of you already know a *materia medica* is a listing of remedies, along with their keynotes and what symptoms and

illnesses they treat.

Well, I've written my own as a framework to guide you through your remedy choices. It's written in my easy-to-understand language, and I've also included my personal insights and experiences – the signs I've learned over the years that help me know when to use a particular remedy.

I encourage you to own A *Materia Medica*: Practical Homeopathy® for Busy Families as a stellar foundation for your continuing homeopathy education.