

# A Few of Our Favorite Things to Take the Sting (and Itch) Out of Summer

By Loraine Fick

Out in the sun too long, or attracting too much attention from bugs? Try these homegrown treatments to ease the discomfort of a burn or bite. They've worked well for generations, are made of simple ingredients you can find around the house and won't harm the environment.



## Bee stings



Gently scrape the stinger off with a credit card or clean fingernail. Wash with soap and water, and then soothe the sting with a paste of unseasoned meat tenderizer and water (enzymes in meat tenderizer can break down bee venom) or baking soda and water.

**Caution:** Call 911 if you experience severe symptoms such as shortness of breath or dizziness after a bee sting. This could indicate a life-threatening allergic reaction.



# Sunburn

For mild sunburn, use cool cloths on affected areas and apply a lotion containing aloe vera. And next time, use more sunscreen — about a shot-glass-size amount applied every few hours you're in the sun.

Caution: If your burn is accompanied by discoloration, excessive blistering or intense itching, seek medical attention immediately.



# Mosquito bites

Rub a wet or dry bar of soap over the bite. Or try a paste of baking soda and water applied directly to the bite, or a dab of toothpaste.

# Poison ivy/poison oak

Apply one of these to tame the itch: warm (not hot) cooked oatmeal, a paste of baking soda and water, or plain white vinegar.



# Home cures that don't work

## Don't butter a burn

Butter just adds a dirty, greasy film. Instead, run cold water on a minor burn for 10 minutes, wrap lightly in a clean towel and apply a bag of frozen veggies (don't apply ice directly to the skin).

## For scrapes, skip the hydrogen peroxide

It can actually delay healing. You're better off washing scrapes with soap and water and covering with a bandage.

## Alcohol isn't cool

Don't apply rubbing alcohol to skin or drink an alcoholic beverage to cool down — both actually make it harder to lose excess heat. Get in the shade and drink water.