

Insect Control Overview by Product

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Insect control around your horse and the stall, barn, stable, and home is no small task. True, when it comes to size, flies, mosquitoes, gnats, ticks, lice, and mites pale in comparison to your horse. But just one pesky face fly buzzing around your horse's ears can cause annoyance or discomfort. Worse, many insects are carriers of disease - some of which can cause serious medical conditions, such as Lyme disease, West Nile Virus, or encephalitis. In some extreme instances, a single insect bite can even lead to the loss of your horse. Thankfully, there are a range of products on the market to help comfort and protect your animals and family.

The basics of effective insect control for horses

In some regards, equine insect control depends on personal preference. Some sprays, ointments, wipes, or shampoos target specific insect species. Others are designed for ease of use. Still others are specialized for specific body areas. The key is to choose products that offer the protection you need in the form you find easiest to use around your horse and her surroundings. Basically, insect control products for horses can be broken into the following categories:

- **Sprays** - whether aerosol or liquid, sprays are easy to apply and can cover a large area of your horse's body, the barn or stall perimeter, or tack accessories with ease.
- **Ointments/Salves** - topical crèmes and gels are perfect to target specific areas around wounds or sensitive face and ear areas.
- **Spot-Ons** - liquids with concentrated active ingredients in convenient applicator tubes are easy to spot-on for whole body, longer-lasting protection.
- **Wipes** - liquids wiped over your horse's body, tack accessories, or perimeter offer more complete, targeted coverage of areas that sprays and salves might miss.
- **Dusting Powder** - fine powders are designed to cling to your horse's hair and, usually, target specific insect species, such as lice.
- **Roll-Ons** - liquids in convenient applicator bottles are perfect for sensitive facial areas and around equine wounds and sores. Most feature a large applicator ball to speed use.
- **Feed Additives** - edible powders or pellets often work to create manure that is inhospitable to insect larvae development. Some, like garlic, may create a scent on your horse that repels insects; however, science has yet to prove this age-old belief.
- **Traps** - whether traditional fly paper, special glue, or scientifically-formulated pheromone attractants, traps lure, catch, and hold a range of insects. They are great for perimeter use around any stall, throughout your barn, or around your paddock or pasture.

Common active ingredients to rid and repel insects

There are a range of natural and scientifically formulated ingredients that work to control insects. Understanding these ingredients, however, can be confusing. Basically, each active ingredient either tries to kill adult insects, kill immature larvae

or eggs, or repel insects away from your horse and her surroundings. The chart below further defines each of the common active ingredients you will find in most [insect control products](#).

Ingredient	Description	Kills Adults	Kills Immature	Repels	Use
Pyrethrin	Natural extracts made from chrysanthemum flowers that affect an insect's nervous system. It is one of the safer insecticides.	✓		✓	Topical Perimeter
Permethrin	Synthetic pyrethrin made in the laboratory. Though generally slower in action than natural pyrethrins, permethrins have a longer effect.	✓		✓	Topical Perimeter
Diflubenzuron	Insect growth inhibitor that prevents chitin formation, which is necessary for larvae growth. Helps create inhospitable manure.		✓		Oral
Butoxypolypropylene Glycol	Works to repel insects.			✓	Topical Perimeter
Zeta-cypermethrin	A type of synthetic permethrin.	✓		✓	Topical Perimeter
Dipropyl isocinchomeronate	Works to repel insects.			✓	Topical Perimeter
Citronella	"Natural" insecticide made from dried grasses. May repel, not kill, insects. There have been no clinical trials to prove its effectiveness.			✓	Topical Perimeter

Diatomaceous Earth	Crushed fossils of freshwater organisms and marine life that may inhibit larvae growth.	✓	Oral		
Garlic	Reported to repel insects when taken orally. There have been no clinical trials to prove its effectiveness.	✓	Oral		
Vitamin B1 (thiamine chloride)	Reported to repel insects when taken orally. There have been no clinical trials to prove its effectiveness.	✓	Oral		
Brewer's Yeast	Reported to repel insects when taken orally. There have been no clinical trials to prove its effectiveness.	✓	Oral		
<i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> subspecies <i>israelensis</i> (BTI) bacteria	Bacteria that produces a toxin to kill mosquito larvae. Usually added to stock tanks or ponds, where mosquitoes breed.	✓	Add to standing water sources		
Piperonyl butoxide	A synergist for pyrethrins, which means it helps the pyrethrin be more effective.	-	-	-	Topical Perimeter

N-octyl bicycloheptene dicarboximide	A synergist for pyrethrins, which means it helps the pyrethrin be more effective.	-	-	-	Topical Perimeter
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