

Nature's Defence Insecticidal Plants

Soumendra Nath Das



Image Credit: Flickr

Karanja (*Pongamia pinata*)

Karanja is a well-adapted arid zone tree of India, which has multifarious uses. Seed extract and powder of karanja act as an antifeedant and repellent of insect pests like rice hispa, root knot nematodes, thrips, jassids and whiteflies. The biopesticide isolated from the seed oil of karanja works as an effective acaricide.

Custard apple (*Annona squamosa*)

This sub-tropical fruit has its own insecticidal properties due to the presence of 'anonine' — a bioactive benzyl-isoquinoline alkaloid in its leaves and seeds. 'Acetogenin' — a potent toxic compound found in the seed oil, is responsible for acting as a biopesticide to control a variety of crop pests like termites, white flies, aphids and mealybugs.



Image Credit: Flickr

Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum cinerariaefolium*)

'Pyrethrin' is an insecticide found naturally in the flowers of chrysanthemum. Pyrethrin is a mixture of six chemicals that are toxic to crop insects. This potent insecticide targets the nervous system of crop insects like aphids, caterpillars, leaf hoppers, cabbage worms and cucumber beetles and kills them.