

## Insect Repellent

On SCOPE's Camping Science episode, Julia made insect repellent from eucalyptus leaves. Here's how you can make some on your next camping trip:



### Warning:

This activity involves using a camping stove, so young scientists will need an adult to help.

### What you need:

- 1 bunch of eucalyptus leaves
- Olive oil
- Camping stove
- Large pot
- Strainer
- Glass jar
- Spray bottle
- Measuring cups

### What to do:

1. Extract the eucalyptus oil by crushing the eucalyptus leaves with your hands.
2. Place  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of crushed leaves and 2 cups of olive oil into a large pot.
3. Ask an adult to turn on the stove to a low heat.
4. Simmer the mixture for about 6 hours.
5. Turn off the stove and let the mixture cool.
6. Strain the mixture into a glass jar, to separate the leaves from the eucalyptus oil.
7. Fill the spray bottle with about  $\frac{3}{4}$  warm water and about  $\frac{1}{4}$  eucalyptus oil.
8. Shake well and then you have your very own bottle of insect repellent!

### What's happening?

There are around 700 different species of Eucalyptus trees found all over Australia. They can be shrubs or towering trees with some species being among the tallest trees in the world! Eucalypts are also known as gum trees because some species ooze gummy sap from breaks in their bark.

The eucalypts' strong, characteristic smell comes from the eucalyptus oil released from glands in the leaves. This oil can be extracted and used to relieve colds, muscle aches and pains, and sore throats. It can prevent infection, as well as help clean clothes and your pets! It can also be used to keep bugs off plants... and us!

The insect repellent made from eucalyptus oil works by masking your body odour, which is one of the things that attract the insects to you in the first place. And, on the off chance you do get bitten, you can also use the eucalyptus oil to help relieve the itching!