

Plants Skilled in Animal Chemistry

It occurred to scientists only about 30 years ago that insect pests might be controlled through hormones. If, for example, a hormone that prevented a destructive insect from reaching maturity was applied to a crop, the interrupted life cycle of the insect might prevent damage to the crop. Yet the hormone would be a safe, natural substance.

However, scientists found that synthesizing such hormones was much more difficult than they thought. Several years into the research, Japanese scientists discovered that certain plants were already making these hormones for self-defense. In fact, many of the plants were manufacturing what they called “super-hormones.” “Super-hormones” are hormones that work in far lower concentrations than the juvenile hormones made by the insects themselves. These juvenile hormones prevent insects from reaching their adult, and usually most destructive, stage. Among those plants that make juvenile insect hormones are ferns and certain evergreens.

One result of this research is the development of a mosquito juvenile hormone. This hormone can be time-released from briquettes in swamps, preventing mosquito wigglers from ever maturing to their flying, biting, adult stage.

Again, the incredible design and balance that could only have been built into the world by a wise Creator are evident in the creation. How else could plants have gained such skill in animal chemistry?

Genesis 1:11

“And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.”

Prayer: Dear Lord, guide our thinking so that we may discover the wisdom You built into the created world. Help us to learn how You have made things so that we may find nondestructive ways to control pests. Ultimately, help me and all Christians to tell those around us about the greatest wisdom of God, which is found in the Gospel of salvation. Amen.