



NATURAL INSECT ATTRACTANTS TO IMPROVE GULAYAN SA PAARALAN

LOUIE L. ALVAREZ
Principal III
Lemery Pilot Elementary School

The recent Training on Organic Agriculture Production (OAP) for NC II for the learners of the Lemery Pilot ES Alternative Learning System (ALS) benefited the school in terms of improving and maintaining Gulayan sa Paaralan for this year.

The said training paved way for the 24 ALS students to learn how to produce organic vegetables and organic fertilizers in which even learners from Grade 4-6 of LPES were able to adapt the said competencies as integrated in their Agriculture classes.

Aside from improved ways on nursery maintenance, land preparation, planting and harvesting, the use of Natural Insect Attractants placed in discarded plastic bottles became evident in the said activity.

What is a Natural Insect Attractant?

Insect Attractants are substances that openly attract insects or pests toward a particular area or an improvised trap such as used plastic bottles dumped in the community or even in the school campus.

According to OAP NC II Trainer Carolyn De Leon, natural attractants are safer and more sustainable alternatives compared to inorganic pest control mixtures. These can also be easily made by students which can assure protection to one's health.

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"Substances in the mixture placed in the bottle are purely organic and safe not just to health but also for the environment," said De Leon.

De Leon explained that the attractants that ALS learners produced are combination of bioactive materials molasses, coconut vinegar and fermented plant juice which are generally cheaper than the inorganic substances.

Specifically, fluid from the plant and coconut vinegar are plant volatiles since they have odor that can direct herbivorous pests into the trap which effectively protect the crops planted.

"Such mixture in the trap simulates the natural signs that insects use to find food or habitats that is why insects that are pests also in crops are easily trapped in the bottle," added De Leon.

How beneficial attractants are?

In a separate interview to Agriculture Teacher Jay G. Porteza, he mentioned that after the Natural Insect Attractants were introduced by the ALS Learners, the school was able to reduce the use of chemical pesticides which can assure protection of the health of the learners and school heads.

"From the crops produced by our Gulayan sa Paaralan, these are safe for learners who will consume the crops free from chemical pesticides particularly the 142 beneficiaries of School Feeding Program wherein foods cooked for them come from the school garden," explained Porteza.

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Porteza also disclosed that natural attractants were able to increase crop production in the Gulayan sa Paaralan since the use of the Natural Insect Attractants instead of the chemical pesticides helped in making crops healthier and having longer shelf life.

However, despite the potential of the natural insect attractant, still there are issues and challenges as regards utilization in the operation of the school garden and even in the community.

Though canister or trap to be used is a recycled bottle still it can be said that the production of the natural attractant can be costly too like the molasses and materials to be used in obtaining coconut vinegar and extracting plant juices.

Meanwhile, specificity of attractants is a challenge also since these are only effective for a few species of insects and at the same time not all attractants are effective given different environmental conditions.

Generally, natural insect attractants offer environmental friendly alternative to other techniques of chemical pest control. As a strategy being used by the school in the management of school farming, it has the ability to become more sustainable, safer, and effective.

By working in harmony with the ALS students, teachers of LPES and with the environment. Natural Insect Attractants reduce our dependence on hazardous chemicals and move further and farther through eco-friendly, flexible methodology to pest control towards a healthier life among the students.

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