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**MISCELLANEA**

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**MILLIPEDE DEFENCE FLUID**

**The following short item, and warning, was circulated by Thomas Wesener:**

Be careful with the ethanol mixed with the defence fluids of Spirostreptida. One species from Madagascar (collected alive) blackened my left thumb - it hurt and the skin is still strange 10 years later.

Another large-bodied genus from the Makay on Madagascar looks like *Aphistogoniulus* (beautifully red-black) - just breathing in the ethanol-defence fluid mix (specimens collected and stored in ethanol for >12 months!) made my eyes water and made me cough violently. I now always wear special nitrile gloves (at least on one hand) when handling Spirostreptida samples from Madagascar. However, these were two samples out of hundreds, if not thousands, I collected or came into contact with in collections!

Other unpleasant millipede encounters include:

- Callipodida, *Callipus* from Italy. They smell like urine and totally ruined my gloves. The smell never went off, and through my gardening gloves my fingers smelt for several days. Probably unpleasant but harmless.
- Spirostreptida, *Salpidobolus* from Indonesia. Some species also in the pet trade. Famous because the nitrile gloves disintegrate and form "bubbles" when in contact with the defence fluid of some species.
- Prof. Krauss once told me he coughed-up blood after handling numerous *Archispirostreptus*.

**At least they can't bite...**