



Craghoppers Nosilife Miguel sleeved shirt and stretch trousers ward off bugs.

# Bugs begone

Insect-repellant clothing gains traction as ticks, mosquitoes and other bugs buzz about

→ **TRAVELING TO HOT, HUMID**, far-off lands or hiking at a local park on the weekend both can lead to the same, nasty consequence: bug bites. Whether gnats or no-see-ums, mosquitoes or midges, the names hardly matter. What *does* matter is that everyone wants to avoid them and the diseases they carry. Companies are making substantial strides in insect-repellant technology, and now is the time to bring products incorporating it to you customers.

A key technology the sector is InsectShield, the first EPA-approved bug repellent treatment for clothing, which lasts up to 70 washes. “It uses a synthesized version of chrysanthemum, a natural bug repellent,” said Danny Heaton, marketing manager at **Craghoppers** (#41165).

“It works because when they land it burns their feet. They will land — it is not an invisible force field — but they

will not bite.”

For Craghoppers, the focus is on the global adventurer. “I would liken our feel as modern-day Indiana Jones,” said Heaton. Their line is almost 50 SKUs deep, but one of the coolest pieces is the Nosilife Gabriella Jersey Dress (MSRP \$95).

The first to use InsectShield in 2003, **ExOfficio** (#12027) is integrating bug-repellant technologies into high-tech travel and lifestyle items.

Its shirts have technical features such as vertebrae ventilation, a shoulder-to-shoulder ventilation system that helps vent where a pack covers. In addition, Exofficio tailors product closely to seasonality.

“I would say that we are the most tenured and successful out of the bug-repellant clothes,” ExOfficio’s general manager, Steve Bendzak, said. “Bugs are seasonal, so customers are seasonal.

You need to think of it like sunscreen. When customers buy sunscreen, they probably will buy bug-repellant clothes.”

Consumers often are preparing for big international trips during the first and fourth quarters of the year, and battling bugs in their backyards at the end of quarters two and three.

For various types of buys, the products are different. “We have focused on our bestselling categories, so as not to take up too much floor space,” Bendzak said. “For the international travelers, we push a basic travel pant and shirt plus hats, bandanas and socks. For the bug seasons, we push lifestyle. We can tell them the features then say, ‘Oh, and it is also bug repellent.’ The bandanas are great because they provide a low barrier in at \$12”

--LORIN PALEY