



How to Control Mosquitoes in Your Yard

Nothing takes the fun out of an evening barbecue outdoors like a bunch of bloodthirsty mosquitoes. In addition to inflicting a painful bite, mosquitoes can transmit diseases. You can help keep your local mosquito population under control by limiting their habitat on your property.

Limit Breeding Habitat

Mosquitoes require water to breed. Adult mosquitoes lay eggs in stagnant or slow moving water, or on moist soil or leaf litter in areas likely to collect water. There are more than 50 species of mosquitoes, two of the most common ones in our area are the Culex Mosquito, which lay their eggs on the surface of water in rain barrels, bird baths, tin cans, old tires, car bodies, roof gutters, and any other container that holds water and Aedes mosquitoes place their eggs at the base of vegetation in low lying areas. Mosquitoes can also deposit their eggs above the water line in artificial containers (such as tin cans and old tires) or in tree holes that hold water. These eggs will hatch when inundated with rain water. By eliminating these water sources, you can keep new generations of mosquitoes from taking up residence in your yard.

Drill holes in the bottom, not the sides, of any garbage or recycling containers stored outdoors. Holes on the sides still allow enough water to accumulate in the bottom for mosquitoes to breed.

Keep gutters clean and unclogged. Be sure your downspouts drain properly, without leaving puddles in the drainage area. You may need to reroute your downspouts or add extensions to carry water away.

Keep swimming pools cleaned and chlorinated, even when not in use. Homeowners who go on vacation without chlorinating their pools may return to a veritable mosquito hatchery.

Walk your property after a rain, and look for areas in the landscape that are not draining well. If you find puddles that remain for four or more days, regrade the area.

Ornamental ponds should be aerated to keep water moving and discourage mosquitoes from laying eggs. Alternately, stock the pond with mosquito-eating fish.

Dump anything that holds water twice per week if it has rained. Birdbaths, non-chlorinated wading pools, footbaths, garbage can lids, and pottery will all attract breeding mosquitoes. Remember to empty the saucers under your flower pots, and don't leave water in pet bowls for more than two days.

Keep your property clean of items that can hold water, including discarded aluminum cans and tires.

Limit Adult Habitat

Adult mosquitoes rest during the day, usually on tall weeds or other vegetation. Make your yard less hospitable to mosquitoes by mowing your lawn regularly, and keep weeds away from your home's foundation.



Avoid Exposure to Mosquitoes

Even when following all the precautions above to eliminate mosquito habitat, some mosquitoes will still be around to spoil your fun. You can limit exposure to the mosquitoes that remain by using effective repellents and barriers.

Window and door screens should be 16-18 mesh and fit snugly, without gaps around the edges. Check your screens for holes and repair or replace them as needed.

Replace your outdoor lights with yellow "bug" lights. These lights do not repel insects, but mosquitoes and other pests are less likely to find them attractive and invade your yard.

When outdoors, apply a DEET-based insect repellent according to the directions on the label. DEET will need to be reapplied in 4-6 hours.

Treat clothing, sunshades, and screen houses with a permethrin-based product, such as Permanone. Permethrin repels both mosquitoes and ticks, and will last through several washes on your clothing.

Some insecticides available commercially may be used by the homeowner for mosquito control. Check the labels for EPA-approved products registered as effective against adult and larval mosquitoes. A light spray application around building foundations, shrubs, and grasses will keep adults from resting in these areas.

Use of some other repellent products, such as citronella candles and mosquito coils, may also be effective if used in windless conditions. Some concerns about mosquito coils, which are impregnated with chemicals, and possible respiratory impacts have been raised recently, however.

What Doesn't Work for Controlling Mosquitoes

Despite what your friends tell you, some popular mosquito control methods have no significant impact on keeping mosquitoes in check. According to Wayne J. Crans, Associate Research Professor in Entomology at Rutgers University, these often-touted mosquito solutions are not worth your time or money.

Bug zappers. Though the satisfying sizzle you hear from this modern day insect torture device will convince you it's working, don't expect much relief from backyard mosquitoes. According to Crans, biting insects (including mosquitoes) generally make up less than 1% of the bugs zapped in these popular devices. Many beneficial insects, on the other hand, do get electrocuted.

Citrosa plants. While citronella oil does have proven mosquito-repellent properties, the genetically-modified plants sold for this purpose do not. In tests by researchers, the test subjects bitten as often

while surrounded by the Citrosa plants as without them. In fact, mosquitoes were observed landing on the leaves of Citrosa plants during the study.

Electronic devices that transmit sounds to mimic male mosquitoes or dragonflies do not work.

Remember !!

Dispose of old tires, buckets, aluminum cans, plastic sheeting or other refuse that can hold water. Empty accumulated water from trash cans, boats, wheel barrows, pet dishes, and flower pot bottoms. If possible, turn these items over when they are not in use.

Clean debris from gutters.... This is one of the most overlooked breeding sites.

Change water in bird baths and wading pools at least once a week and keep swimming pools cleaned and chlorinated.

Larval Control

Use of mosquito larvicide may be beneficial. Larvicides are insecticides which are used to control immature mosquitoes before they have a chance to develop into biting adults. There are two types of larvicide available:

Registered larvicides for application to mosquito breeding sites		
Insecticide	Example Trade Names	Remarks
<i>Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis</i> (Bti)	Mosquito Dunks Mosquito Quick Kill Granules	Apply according to label directions
<i>Methoprene</i>	PreStrike Granules	Apply according to label directions