MOSQUITO CONTROL

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Provided by: Mac Malloy
Extension Field Crops Agent

Rain and warmer weather are closely followed by increases in mosquito activity. Most people think of swamps, ponds, etc., as the source of the mosquitoes in their yards. However, in most residential areas, the source is more likely all of those small and inconspicuous water sources that are prime mosquito breeding sites. So before planning a chemical assault on your yard, start with the simpler and more long-term approach of eliminating "collectibles." We don't mean souvenirs; we're talking about all those objects that collect and retain rainwater.

- Birdbaths - Flush them out with a garden hose. The birds will also appreciate the fresh water.
- Water Troughs - For livestock water troughs near stalls or in pastures, one option is to use a product, such as "Mosquito Dunks," which contains 'Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis' and are labeled for use in animal watering containers. Although you can use them in water bowls for pets, it is far simpler (and better for the animals) if you 'tip and toss' the water and replenish it with fresh water.
- Old Cans, Tires, etc. - Empty them and get rid of them.
- Outdoor Flowerpots - Empty the water from the dishes/trays underneath them. Your plants have plenty of water without the overflow. This also helps reduce fungus gnat problems.
- Gutters - Remove built-up debris. The water and decaying material attract mosquitoes.
- Tarps covering boats, grills, etc., collect pockets of water that can remain for 1-2 weeks.
- The bed of that old pickup that you've been restoring can collect water, particularly if the tailgate faces uphill in your yard.
- Kids' Pools - If kids are not using them, the mosquitoes probably are. Same thing applies to pools (inground or aboveground) that aren't maintained (such as on properties in foreclosure).
• Drainage Ditches - They're meant to collect water temporarily, so keep them free of debris so water flows out.
• Decorative Fishponds - Can be a source of mosquitoes if they contain a lot of vegetation, which provides hiding places for the mosquito larvae. 'Mosquito Dunks' are an option here.
• Tree Holes - When limbs fall off trees, the remaining hole in the trunk can collect water. Flush that out or put a small piece of a 'Mosquito Dunk' in it.

People that use outdoor foggers will definitely kill mosquitoes, but this needs to be done during the peak activity. Two other issues about using outdoor foggers: First, safety is critical. Make sure you're standing upwind from the direction the fog is being applied and wear appropriate protective equipment to prevent the fog from getting into your eyes and lungs or on your skin. Second, know where the fog is going. Some of your neighbors may not want chemicals drifting onto their property (particularly if they're outside eating at the time!). Same thing applies to the automated misting systems that some people have installed on their homes.

One other point to remember - mosquitoes have no concept of property lines. Mosquito management takes a neighborhood effort to be truly effective.

Information compiled by Mike Waldvogel and Charles Apperson, Extension Entomology Specialists with North Carolina State University. For more information, contact Mac Malloy, Extension Field Crops Agent with North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center, at 671-3276, by E-mail at Mac_Malloy@ncsu.edu, visit our website at http://robeson.ces.ncsu.edu/, or check out the factsheet at http://insects.ncsu.edu/Urban/mosquito.htm.