

Mosquito Alert 6/29/17 by Jim DeValerio, Bradford County Extension

FLORIDA RESIDENTS NEED TO MAKE AN EFFORT TO ELIMINATE CONTAINER BREEDING MOSQUITOES AT HOME BY DUMPING, DRAINING OR FLUSHING ALL CONTAINERS THAT HOLD WATER

Florida's warm and rainy conditions create a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes. There are many kinds of mosquitoes. Most are harmless but many transmit mosquito borne diseases to humans, pets, livestock and wild animals. Because it is impossible to separate the mosquitoes that transmit diseases from the ones that do not, precautions should be taken to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

Three diseases; dengue, chikungunya and Zika virus are transmitted by the Asian tiger and the yellow fever container mosquitoes. Container mosquitoes do not travel far from where they hatch resulting in residents having the ability to greatly reduce the number of these mosquitoes by draining, covering and/or flushing all containers that hold water. They are daytime feeders. Use repellants and dress appropriately when mosquitoes are present.

Home owners can reduce mosquitoes by eliminating breeding sites. Mosquitoes only need a few days to turn standing water into a hatchery. Any container that catches rain water, irrigation water or water that runs off a roof needs to be turned over or covered so that it will not collect water. Rain barrels, piles of aluminum cans and trays underneath outdoor plants fall into this category. Some containers such as tires collect water no matter how they lay on the ground. These types of containers need to be punctured at the lowest point so that all the water runs through them.

Your landscape can also be a home for mosquitoes. Certain plants, like bromeliads, have leaves that trap water where mosquitoes will breed. Bromeliads and birdbaths should be flushed at least weekly.

Plants also provide a place where adult mosquitoes can hide because the dense foliage shields them from drying out and dying.

To avoid being bitten, residents should:

- 1. Drain, cover and/or flush containers.**
- 2. Dress appropriately so skin is covered when outside.**
- 3. Use insect repellants correctly. Not all mosquito repellants are created equal. Effectiveness varies with active ingredient & weather conditions, some last longer than others. Deet is the most effective active ingredient.**

Be aware that the previous advice of avoiding being outside at dusk and dawn should be expanded to be wary whenever mosquitoes are present.

Important resources:

Mosquito repellants: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in419>

Traveler's website: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

Container mosquitoes: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in851>

Control % prevention: <http://www.amcdsjc.org/mosquito--pest-info/control--prevention.aspx>

Call 904-966-6299 to report high levels of mosquitoes in Bradford County.

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Tips for Control at Home

<http://www.amcdsjc.org/mosquito--pest-info/control--prevention/prevention-at-home.aspx>

- Remove any unnecessary containers that hold stagnant water and regularly drain necessary containers (including bird baths, gutters, dog water dishes, anything that hold water!). If the container cannot be removed, drill holes in it to allow drainage or treat the water with a larvicide.
- Keep mosquitoes from entering the home by making sure screens on windows and doors are tight.
- Use fluorescent lights outside because they neither attract nor repel mosquitoes. Avoid using incandescent lights because they attract mosquitoes.
- Adult mosquitoes rest in moist shady areas (weeds and shrub beds) during the day. If infestations are heavy, remove weeds.

Using Larvicides

- Larvicides target immature, waterborne mosquitoes that have hatched out but cannot fly yet. The most effective larvicide is to not have standing water.
- There are many kinds of mosquitoes. The nuisance mosquitoes that bothering you may not be originating from the water you suspect is their breeding ground.
- If there is standing water that cannot be drained, before choosing a management strategy, the first action to take is to sample the water to see if mosquito larvae are present (see photo).



If there are larvae present and the water source will hold water a long time, mosquito fish (*Gambusia minnows*) that can be obtained from a local fishery, are the best option.

If the water source will hold water for up to several weeks mosquito dunks (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis (Bti)*), that can be obtained from merchants that sell pesticides. Check the label for the dose. Typically one is used for 100 square feet of water and it kills larvae for several weeks.

More information on larvicides can be found at:

<http://mosquito.ifas.ufl.edu/Larviciding.htm>