

Frequently Asked Questions about Mosquito Control in Bradford County?

Does Bradford County have a mosquito control department?

Yes. The Bradford Mosquito Control is under the Road Department and consists of two part-time employees.

What types of mosquito control efforts are being done in Bradford County?

- Bradford County Mosquito Control (BCMC) provides spraying with truck mounted sprayers targeting adult flying mosquitoes when population levels warrant spraying.
- BC Road Department minimizes breeding grounds through storm water management (shaping ditches so that they drain).
- Volunteers monitor ditches and floodwaters for mosquito larvae and treat with larvicides (if volunteers and funding is available).
- During Public Health emergencies, BCMC may arrange for aerial spraying by plane following extreme rain events.

When do they spray with truck mounted sprayers?

Adult mosquito spraying in Bradford County usually coincides with warm, wet weather between May and October and normally between 7 pm and 10 pm when the adult mosquitoes are most active.

Who can drive the spray truck?

Operators of spray trucks must be certified by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in Public Health Pest Control (PHPC), or be directly supervised by a person with a PHPC license. PHPC applicants must pass two exams, Core & Mosquito Knowledge, for certification. The Core exam covers pesticide safety which includes understanding pesticide labels and personal protective equipment. The Mosquito Knowledge test examines knowledge of mosquitoes and includes topics like mosquito life cycle, mosquito habitats, control strategies, equipment and approved pesticides.

Why can't they spray every time I call?

Pesticide applications must comply with laws that specify how often a chemical can be sprayed and weather conditions required to spray.

Why do I see the spray truck go down my neighbor's street and not mine?

Not every street needs to be sprayed. The turbulence in the air will move the product around and even though the operator skips your street the mosquitoes in the vicinity will still be affected.

Why don't I see, hear or smell if the mosquito spray truck when it comes by?

The technology of mosquito spraying has changed in the past 30 years. No longer do you see a plume of foggy smoke and smell rotten gas. Research has shown that the ULV or Ultra-fine Volume mist of small droplets will effectively kill the adult flying mosquitoes. The new products are applied in much lower quantities with smaller, quieter sprayers that fit down inside a regular pickup truck bed.

What about honey bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects?

Fortunately, most beneficial insects have gone to their hives and/or nests for the night, before mosquitoes become active and are sprayed. Most pollinators are active during daylight hours.

What if I do not want my property sprayed?

Call the Bradford County Extension Service (904-966-6299) or Bradford County Emergency Management (904-966-6337) and asked to be put on the "DO NOT SPRAY" list.

Why were there a lot of mosquitoes after the heavy rains?

During droughty conditions floodwater mosquitoes lay eggs in the moist soil on the ground. After drying they will not hatch until there is a flooding event. Heavy rains can trigger a hatching event resulting in

millions of the mosquito eggs hatching and after several days, the adult populations to soar.

With continued rains mosquitoes can repeat their cycles (from egg to adult) in 5 to 10 days. These cycles are overlapping which means that a portion of the adults lay eggs every day and every day there is another group of adults emerging from pupae in the water.

Every container that holds stagnant water becomes a breeding ground including retention ponds, open containers, roadside ditches and standing water in home landscapes.

Why are the ditches full of water?

Most Bradford County soils are underlined with a clay layer that prevents water from percolating and this creates standing water. There are many low-lying, swampy areas along roadsides that cannot be drained. It is very difficult control mosquitoes in these areas and prospective homeowners should consider drainage conditions before purchasing a home site.

Some of those mosquitoes are huge! What kind are they?

Over 25 kinds of mosquitoes have been documented in Bradford County and the floodwater mosquitoes are the largest ones. Two kinds that you may recognize are *Psorophora ferox*, which has white socks and a painful bite and *Psorophora ciliata*, which is big and hairy. *Ps ciliata* was nicknamed the Gallinipper by the Spanish explorers who believed it could drink a gallon of their blood in one bite!

Why do they suck blood? How does their life cycle work?

Only the female mosquitoes bite and they do so to get enough blood for protein to lay eggs. After she has a blood meal, it takes about 3 days to digest it, then she flies to nearest source of water and lays up to 200 eggs. They can hatch and complete life cycle in 10 drops of water!

What can I do to prevent mosquitoes?

Homeowners can interrupt mosquito life cycles by emptying open containers, draining or filling in tires, change pet and livestock water and birdbaths frequently, keep grass short and do not feed the mosquitoes after dark.

“Mosquito dunks” contain a pelleted biological control organism, B.t.i. It was developed to kill mosquito larvae and can be applied to the standing water in your yard after a rain shower. These can be purchased at the local stores. One mosquito dunk covers 100 square feet and lasts 30 days. This will help kill the larvae in the water and interrupt the life cycle and prevent them from breeding.

What are the FIVE Ds everyone should practice?

- **Avoid** being outside during **Dusk** and **Dawn** hours
- **Dress** appropriately so that your skin is covered when you are out side
- Use a repellent that contains **Deet**
- Check to make sure your yard has proper **Drainage**

Are there other ways to help with mosquito control efforts?

There is a volunteer Buzz Buster program organized by the University of Florida Bradford County Extension Office that assists the Bradford Mosquito Control program. Volunteers are trained to scout, collect and monitor larval and adult mosquitoes. BCMC uses the information gathered by volunteers as decision making tools when deciding when and where to apply mosquito insecticides.

Find out more about the Buzz Busters by calling 904-966-6299 or visiting our website: <http://bradford.ifas.ufl.edu/BuzzBusterMosquitoSurveillance.shtml>