

How to Deal with Mosquitoes

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Fast Facts:

- Female mosquitoes feed on us using their needle-like mouthparts. They need to take blood meals in order to create eggs for the next generation. Eggs are laid in bodies of water where larvae will complete development.
- Mosquito bites result in itchy raised welts on the skin. This is a reaction to the saliva they inject when feeding on us. Mosquitoes are also potent disease vectors carrying illnesses such as West Nile virus.
- Limit mosquito populations by eliminating water breeding grounds and minimize bites by wearing repellents such as DEET, picardin, or lemon-eucalyptus oil

BIOLOGY

Mosquitoes go through four stages of development, egg, larvae, pupae, and adult, and during the warmest part of the year can go through these stages in 7-10 days. The larval stage of mosquitoes is aquatic. These “wrigglers” as they are often called live in puddles, tree holes, ponds, and human-made objects like flower pots and tires. Most wrigglers feed on plant material that develops in their watery habitat. After adults emerge from their pupal form they begin to feed and mate. Mosquito adults feed on nectar from flowers to obtain sugar to fuel their flights. Female mosquitoes must also take a blood meal to help maximize the health and success of the eggs she lays. Mosquitoes feed on many animals including humans and are important vectors for diseases such as West Nile virus. As they feed on us they inject their saliva which induce a localized allergic reaction, the red itchy bump that appears on your skin afterwards.



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Mosquito larvae require water to live in. If you eliminate breeding sites, you can minimize populations



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Adult female mosquitoes feed on us to help their eggs, their saliva induces an itchy red welt

MANAGEMENT

Mosquito management is contingent upon breeding ground control. Throw away garbage that collects water and regularly empty out rain barrels, kiddie pools, bird baths, etc. by tipping them over at least once a week. If you have small ponds or permanent fixtures that can't be overturned, treat the water with a product like methoprene or organic products like mosquito dunks containing Bti (seen to the right) to kill larvae.

To minimize biting incidences, use an insect repellent. Repellents make mosquitoes less interested in feeding you but you must remember that the more you sweat, the quicker the repellent wears off. You must also apply the product uniformly and thoroughly to insure the best protection. Repellents that contain DEET, picardin, or lemon-eucalyptus oil have documented research to show they work.

