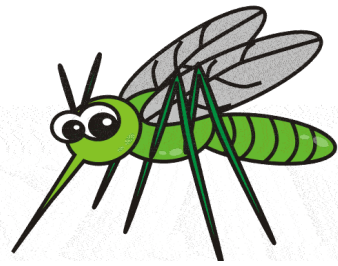


Fight the Bite!

Home and Garden Maintenance Checklist



If mosquitoes or ticks are a problem where you live, make sure that you are not providing breeding sites in your own yard. Mosquitoes only need a few tablespoons of water to breed. The most effective way to control mosquitoes and ticks is to eliminate the areas where they can live or lay eggs.

Check for the following on your property:

- Animals.** Dogs and cats can become infected, but rarely become ill and do not spread the virus. Keep animal areas dry. Keep food and water bowls clean. Check pets regularly for ticks. A vaccine is available for horses.
- Birdbaths.** Clean or hose out birdbaths weekly.
- BTI.** Natural bacteria that kills mosquito and fly larvae yet is non-toxic to animals when used properly. Kills larvae developing in water. (See “dunks”, below).
- Building material.** Unused pipe should be kept inside or turned over so that no water accumulates.
- Chain link fence.** Cover chain link fence posts with metal or plastic caps since they are hollow pipes.
- Clothing.** Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants when working around mosquito infested areas.
- Containers.** Cover containers or turn upside down so that they do not hold water including: ashtrays, boxes, buckets, cans, cups, jars and pots.
- Dawn/Dusk.** The times of day that biting mosquitoes are most active since they avoid the heat of the day.
- Dead birds.** Pick up dead birds with a shovel or gloves. Double bag in plastic and dispose in trash. Dead birds should not be handled directly in order to avoid possible exposure to the virus. Wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.
- DEET.** The active ingredient in insect repellent. A 10% concentration is recommended for kids.
- Drains.** Keep outdoor drains flowing freely.
- Dripping Water.** Fix leaky faucets, air conditioners and hoses.
- Drought.** Drought conditions may help spread West Nile Virus since birds and mosquitoes share the same few water sources, even in yards
- Dumpsters.** Keep dumpsters covered, and remove any water inside and under the dumpster.
- Dunks.** Dunks are donut-sized pellets that kill mosquito larvae but are non-toxic to animals. They dissolve slowly in water. Available at hardware and garden stores. (See “BTI”, above.)
- Flat Roofs.** Inspect weekly to remove any puddles. Fix leaks from air conditioners and pipe. Keep rain gutters clear of debris and flowing freely.
- Irrigation.** Do not overwater. Eliminate any areas of excess standing water weekly.
- Landscaping.** Remove plastic sheeting under bark or rock and replace with landscape fabric that prevents weeds yet allows water through.



- Lawn ornaments. Should be checked for areas that hold water, and drained or flushed weekly.
- Lighting. Check garden lights and eliminate water from tops of fixtures and from inside floodlights.
- Playgrounds. Drill drainage holes in tire swings and playground equipment that holds water.
- Ponds. Stock with mosquito eating fish. Use mosquito dunks or BTI in ponds and larger bodies of water. Follow instructions for safe use.
- Potted plants. Do not overwater plants. Empty saucers weekly or flush with garden hose. Drill small drainage holes in outdoor saucers.
- Pools / spas. Maintained pools and whirlpool spas are not a hazard since pool chemicals and filters kill any larvae. Use dunks in deserted pools and spas.
- Rain barrels. Cover tightly with screening.
- Rain gutters. Keep gutters clear of debris. They can become breeding areas with standing water.
- Recycling bins. Cut top and bottom from tin cans and flatten. Invert glass jars. Crush soft drink bottles and cans. Store newspapers on end, not flat. Drill drainage holes in bottom of recycling bin.
- Screens. Install and maintain tight-fitting window and door screens.
- Shrubbery. Trim and thin shrubs and bushy plants since they can be mosquito or tick hiding areas.
- Tool sheds. Keep shed roofs maintained and eliminate water around foundation.
- Tires. Properly dispose of old tires. Drill drainage holes in tires used in swing sets, retaining walls and in landscaping.
- Toys. Store inside or turn on side to prevent water from accumulating. Empty toys of accumulated water at least weekly.
- Trees. Eliminate water from dead tree stumps and hollow areas of live trees. Fill cavities with sand and flush weekly with a hose.
- Trash. Remove anything that can hold water including cans, cups, tin foil, plastic and paper since mosquito larvae can grow if water is left in these items.
- Trash cans. Keep trash can covered. Remove buckets and containers from around trash areas.
- Umbrellas. Table umbrella and basketball bases often are filled with water. Cap tightly, seal with duct tape or fill with sand and cover tightly.
- Weeds. Remove weeds and underbrush, especially around areas close to water.
- Wheelbarrows. Store wheelbarrows vertically or turned over to prevent water accumulation.

For more prevention information, check out the following websites:

Somerset County Department of Health

www.co.somerset.nj.us/health

Somerset County Mosquito Commission

<http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/mosquito/mosquitocontrolqna.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/lyme and www.cdc.gov/westnile

