

Mosquito Prevention Top Ten Tips

Prevent your swimming pool from becoming a breeding ground. If you aren't using your swimming pool, put a cover over it. Make sure the cover doesn't sag and hold pools of rainwater, which can also provide a breeding ground. Another option is to stock the pool with fish, which will eat the mosquito larvae and prevent them from hatching off. *Gambusia*, or mosquito fish, are available to residents from Mosquito Control staff by calling 635-5400.

If you have bromeliad plants in your yard, regularly rinse them out with a garden hose. Mosquito larvae need water to grow and evolve, and bromeliads are an excellent host. The average bromeliad can be expected to produce around a hundred mosquitoes per year. That may not seem like much, but if you have ten or twenty plants in your yard, that's several thousand mosquitoes!

Protect your children from mosquitoes, especially at night. Hot, sweaty children playing outdoors at night are like a glowing beacon to mosquitoes. Protect your children from irritating bites and the possibility of mosquito-borne illnesses by ensuring they cover exposed skin, and wear an insect repellent containing DEET.

Keep your rain gutters cleaned out. Rain gutters can get clogged with leaves and debris, which impede the flow of water. Not only is that bad for your roof, it creates an ideal habitat for mosquito larvae, which need water to grow into adults.

Take special precautions at dusk. Dusk is a mosquito's favorite time to fly and bite. A good onshore breeze will keep the mosquitoes at bay, but if you haven't got one, a portable fan will do the trick. Mosquitoes aren't strong fliers, and air currents moving past you will keep the mosquitoes moving too. Remember also to wear long sleeves and insect repellent containing DEET.

Take special precautions in high mosquito areas. Use head nets, long sleeves and long pants if you venture into areas with high mosquito populations, such as salt marshes.

Take special precautions when a warning is in effect. If there is a mosquito-borne disease warning in effect, stay inside during the evening when mosquitoes are active.

Make sure window and door screens are "bug tight." Check your screens periodically to make sure there are no holes and replace worn-out screens.

Get rid of mosquito-breeding containers. Destroy or dispose of tin cans, old tires, buckets, unused plastic swimming pools or other containers that collect and

hold water. Do not allow water to accumulate in the saucers of flowerpots, cemetery urns or in pet dishes for more than 2 days.

Prevent puddles in your yard. Irrigate lawns and gardens carefully to get rid of water from standing for several days.

If you have tried these tips and are still having a mosquito problem around your home, you can call the County's Mosquito Control and Aquatic Weed Unit at 635-5400 to speak to staff. They offer free on-site inspections to give suggestions and may schedule treatment if it is found to be necessary as a result of the visit.