



COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL PESTICIDE EDUCATION PROGRAM

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MOSQUITOES: HOW TO MANAGE THEM AROUND YOUR HOME

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This fact sheet describes how to control mosquitoes around your home.

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Mosquitoes: How to Manage Them Around Your Home

There are about 170 different species of mosquitoes in North America, all of which live in specific habitats and exhibit unique behaviors. Mosquito bites can cause a severe skin irritation through an allergic reaction to the mosquito's saliva - causing the red bump and itching. But a more serious consequence of some mosquito bites may be the transmission of certain serious diseases such as dengue fever, malaria, and several forms of encephalitis such as West Nile encephalitis. Dogs and horses are also susceptible to several mosquito-transmitted diseases and parasites such as dog heartworms, Western Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus.

Larval management is the key to controlling mosquitoes. Immature mosquitoes are worm-like larvae, known as wigglers, that live in shallow water and feed on microorganisms. Mosquitoes rarely breed in moving water. Mosquitoes hatch within 7 to 10 days. If you can reduce the amount of standing water around your house, you can reduce the number of mosquitoes.

The following are ways to "mosquito-proof" your yard:

- Change all water holding containers in your yard on a regular basis, at least once a week, children's wading pools, rain barrels, buckets, and bird baths are prime examples of breeding sites. Check anywhere that could hold water such as children's toys, wheelbarrows, stored boats, barbecues, and pool covers and empty them. Discard old tires or other items that could collect water.
- Over-watering and poor irrigation practices can provide mosquito breeding site around your home.
- Ditches must be kept clear of vegetation and other debris to promote rapid drainage. Ensure that your yard has been properly backfilled and graded to prevent drainage problems. Drain or fill any temporary pools with dirt.

- Clear troughs and down spouts of leaves and other debris that slows drainage and keep rain gutters unclogged.
- Keep swimming pools maintained and circulating, pool chemicals and filters kill larvae. Use dunks, donut-sized pellets that kill mosquito larvae but are non-toxic to animals, for deserted pools and spas. Dunks are available at hardware and garden stores.
- Stock ponds with mosquito eating fish or use mosquito dunks that are non-toxic to animals for large bodies of water.
- Keep all ornamental shrubs and bushes pruned to open them up to light and airflow. This will not only give mosquitoes one less place to hide, but will promote growth and vigor in the plant.
- Keep your lawn as short as is practical and cut back all low, dense under-growth surrounding your yard. This is where mosquitoes go to hide during the day.
- Beware of products on the market that do not provide effective mosquito management. Backyard bug “zappers”, which lure and execute insects, are ineffective and ultrasonic devices do not affect mosquito activity.
- Remember, standing water means mosquitoes.

References and Resources

Peairs, F.B. and W.S. Cranshaw, *Mosquito Management, Fact Sheet No 5.526*, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, Dec. 2001

U.S. Environmental Pesticide Agency (EPA):

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/health/mosquitoes/mosquito.htm>

American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA):

<http://www.mosquito.org/mosquito-information/index.aspx>

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