

Control Mosquitoes Now – Dump Standing Water

Eliminating standing water is the most effective way to control mosquitoes and now is the time to start. Mosquitoes are now becoming active as temperatures consistently reach 50 degrees F or higher. They are annoying and can carry disease. While it is tempting to use sprays, these insecticides are temporary and kill pollinators and many other beneficial insects. Insect populations are dropping precipitously worldwide. There are 3 billion fewer birds (who are insect eaters) in North America than there were 50 years ago. Here are better strategies.

- Mosquitoes are best controlled at the larval stage, not as adults. Female mosquitoes bite for a blood meal before laying eggs in standing water. These eggs hatch in 2-3 days, and adults emerge in 7-10. The most effective control is to dump the outside water at least every 7 days - bird baths, potted plant saucers, leaky hoses, toys left outside, kiddie pools, clogged gutters, corrugated drain pipes, upturned lids, pet water bowls. Even a tablespoon of water left for 7 days is enough for mosquitoes. Get the kids involved and encourage your neighbors to do the same.
- Where you can't dump the water, use BTi (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*, the active ingredient in Mosquito Dunks and Bits), which kills mosquito larvae without harming birds, beneficial insects, or other wildlife.
- Explore alternatives to English ivy and other dense groundcovers where mosquitoes rest and breed during the day

Taking action now while the population is still low will reduce the numbers later in the summer when you want to be out enjoying your yard.

To learn more about mosquitoes and how to control them check out these articles written by the Extension Master Gardeners of Arlington and Alexandria:

- [Protecting Yourself From Mosquitoes ... Without Harming Pollinators](#)
- [Mosquito Control Begins with a Home Walk-Around](#)

For more information about mosquitoes and ticks: Contact the Extension Master Gardener Help Desk by email mgarlalex@gmail.com by phone (703) 228-6414, or drop in Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.