

## Are Mosquitos Spoiling Your Outdoor Fun?

Earlier this week I had the opportunity of asking my co-worker how she enjoyed her weekend. Her reply was, “great, although I had a few mosquito bites.” Unfortunately, she was not alone; over the weekend my family had a late evening outdoor activity and we were all plagued by mosquitoes which lead me to write this article. Some of us are enjoying the warm rainy season and likewise, the mosquitoes are out in abundance. Bear in mind that mosquitoes are not only simple nuisances but can also be vectors that transmit deadly diseases.

In order for us to have an effective mosquito control it is important that we have a basic understanding of their biology. Just to shed some light; mosquitoes lay groups of eggs on the surface of standing water where they later hatch into larvae also called wigglers. With this information, we now know that we must start our control program by changing their environment and attacking their larvae. Listed below are several recommendations that you can take to help reduce mosquito populations from developing.

Remove, turn over, or cover all containers that are capable of holding water. Clean bird baths and replenish with fresh water on a weekly basis. Also ensure that roof gutters are not clogged and capable of holding water. Flowerpot saucers and other spots where rain and irrigation water collect should be checked frequently. Prune shrubs, mow overgrown grass, and kill weeds where adult mosquitoes hide during the day.

Used tires often serve as a major breeding ground for mosquitoes and therefore should be recycled and properly disposed of to prevent an infestation. Report all illegal tire dumps to Osceola County Solid Waste Management by calling 407-762-7752.

For personal protection, apply a repellent containing DEET to your body and spray outdoor repellent on the lawn and around the immediate area where people will congregate. These repellants are readily available at your favorite lawn and garden center. There are also herbal repellants which are only effective for a short period.

If using citronella candles, position them so that the breeze is directing the candle smoke toward you; the smoke is what repels mosquitoes.

Traps that use light and/or carbon dioxide to lure in mosquitoes may actually attract more mosquitoes than they kill. So, if you decide to use one of these, consider buying one and giving it to your neighbor down the street. For severe infestations, hiring a professional pest control company with expertise in mosquito control is an option.

Mosquito larvicides can be placed in stagnant water. These products are available at many area garden centers and plant nurseries.

For more information on landscaping and other related horticulture topics, contact Grantly Ricketts with UF/IFAS Extension in Osceola County at 321-697-3000 or email [gricketts@ufl.edu](mailto:gricketts@ufl.edu).