



AVOID & REDUCE MOSQUITOES

Climate conditions (rain and temperature patterns) can affect mosquito numbers on a yearly, monthly or even weekly basis. The first thing we must ask ourselves is why so many mosquitoes so fast and where are they coming from? Although it seems natural to assume the mosquitoes are coming from large areas of visible standing water, that is not necessarily the case. Trees have small cavities where water can pool and serve as a spot for mosquitoes to reproduce without any predators to consume the larvae. Yes, large, stagnate areas like undrained lawns can produce many adult mosquitoes, but even the smallest puddle can support mosquito larvae (bird baths, clogged gutters, kids' toys, buckets, used tires, etc.).

Wetlands are often cited as a place people speculate the mosquitoes are coming from, however, in a healthy functioning open wetland the mosquito larvae are kept in check by the other larvae (such as damselfly and dragonfly larvae). It's a challenge to find mosquito larvae while sampling aquatic creatures from local wetlands. Typically, students find buckets full of damselfly larvae. That is a good thing as not only will the damselfly larvae eat the mosquito larvae; the adult damselflies will consume adult mosquitoes. Scientists have proven that the creation of healthy wetlands near forests can decrease adult mosquito populations as the wetland will overproduce adult mosquito predators. However, the creation of more wetlands is expensive and often controversial.

HOW CAN YOU AVOID & REDUCE MOSQUITOES IN YOUR BACKYARD?

- **Eliminate or Treat Standing Water.** Standing water is a breeding ground for mosquito larvae. Walk around your yard and empty water from containers, empty/refill bird baths daily, fill in low areas with soil/mulch. Larvicides can be used to treat wet areas that will not be used for drinking, where mosquitoes may breed. The Wood County Health Department distributes mosquito dunks to residents free of charge. They can be used in areas like rain barrels, pool covers, fountains, septic tanks and gutters. For more information, visit the Health Department's Environmental Health Division on East Gypsy Lane Road in Bowling Green, or call 419-354-2702.
- **Use Mosquito Repellents** that contain DEET, or another EPA approved product. Natural repellents containing lemon eucalyptus oil may provide relief as well. Do not like sprays? Consider Thermacell portable mosquito repellent devices or wear long, loose fitting clothing.
- **Use Mosquito Netting and Fans** around gazebos, decks, and patios to keep mosquitoes away from sitting areas.
- **Plant Mosquito Repellent Plants.** Citronella, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Cat Nip, and Marigolds have been shown to contain mosquito repelling properties.
- **Limit Outdoor Activity from Dusk to Dawn** when mosquitoes are most active.