



It's Mosquito Time! Top 10 Tips to Be Out There and Manage Summertime Pests

Reston, Va. (July 22)—To [Be Out There](#), many families take their daily activities outdoors in the summer, but this season can be primetime for America's peskiest insect—the mosquito.

Mosquito numbers have exploded this year in reaction to the wet spring and early summer in many parts of the country. Extreme wet weather creates areas that serve as nurseries for mosquito larvae. There are ways to [enjoy the outdoors](#) without being pestered by exploding mosquito populations. David Mizejewski, naturalist at National Wildlife Federation, provides his top 10 tips to avoid summertime swarms. These tips will help families avoid these pesky biters.

Understanding the mosquito's life cycle and ecology can help you avoid getting bitten, Mizejewski points out. Mosquitoes start life out as aquatic larvae in standing bodies of water such as ponds, swamps and marshes, and larvae can live in as little as an inch of water.

10 Tips To Keep Mosquitoes At Bay

1. Remove unnecessary standing water around your home. Typical hot-beds for mosquito reproduction are clogged gutters, flower-pot drainage dishes, children's play equipment, tarps and any debris that can hold water.
2. Share this advice with your neighbors. Mosquitoes that emerge in their yards will easily travel to yours.
3. Empty and refill birdbaths every few days. It takes a minimum of about a week for the metamorphosis from egg to larva to pupa to winged adult to be completed, so this eliminates any chance that your birdbath will serve as a mosquito nursery.
4. Attract mosquito predators. Add plants to water gardens to attract frogs, salamanders and dragonflies and put up houses for birds and bats. Fish feed on mosquito larvae, just don't release goldfish or other exotic species into natural areas.

5. Don't use insecticides or put oil on the surface of bodies of water. This kills beneficial insects, mosquito predators and causes air and water pollution.
6. "Mosquito Dunks" that contain natural bacteria that kills mosquitoes can be added to water gardens without harming fish, birds or other wildlife. (Closely related insects, some beneficial, could be affected though.)
7. DEET-based repellants are effective but if you want to avoid synthetic chemicals, aromatic herbal repellents also work if applied frequently.
8. Avoid going outdoors at dusk, which is peak mosquito time, or wear long sleeves to minimize exposed skin that could be bitten.
9. Bug zappers aren't effective against mosquitoes. Zappers do kill thousands of beneficial insects a night.
10. Mosquitoes are not strong flyers and the breeze created by a fan is often all you need to keep a patio or deck mosquito-free so you can enjoy the outdoors.

Additional Resources:

More about mosquitoes in National Wildlife Magazine: <http://bit.ly/nwf-mosquitoes>

To read about mosquito life cycle and ecology on NWF's Wildlife Promise blog, visit: http://bit.ly/mosquito_blog

To learn more about exploding mosquito populations due to our changing climate, visit (toward the bottom): www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/research/2008/flood08.html

National Wildlife Federation is America's largest conservation organization inspiring Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future. Visit www.nwf.org.

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