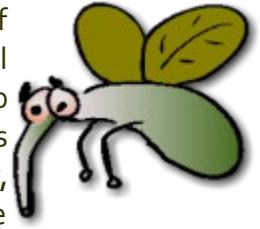


Mosquito Control Tips

by Odin Wortman

Most of us love the warmer seasons of Maryland but along with the lush beauty of Spring comes an inevitable undesirable: The mosquito! But don't blame all mosquitoes. Only the silent females suck your blood. Anticoagulants keep the tap flowing and cause itching and swelling. With West Nile virus on the rise (10 cases in Maryland, 2007), infectious disease is increasingly a real threat. Unfortunately, these tiny vampires don't come out only at night. Some breeds do just fine in the shade and near water sources on cloudy days.



As a lover of the Maryland outdoors, there is no way to completely eliminate these pests but here are some approaches that should help. Important note: contact your local health official, physician, or refer to the [CDC Web site](#) for official details on personal risks and prevention.

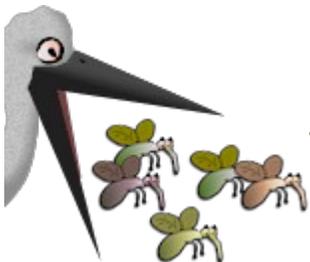
1) Drainage Improvement

Proper drainage is good way to improve your residential or commercial property. Good drainage adds value, is sustainable-green and reduces maintenance. Through good planning, even swampy drainage fields can be moved away from areas where people congregate. Regrading with better swales moves water along. If you have problems with standing water, the issues involved are too complex to discuss fully here but here are some tips.

Go with the flow. Make sure your landscaping doesn't interrupt drainage. Take a look at the grading of swells and troughs that pull water away from structures and guide water toward drainage fields, gutters, and drainage ponds. Rake out obstructions and generally do what you can to keep water moving. Severe problems may require the help of a professional who specializes in functional, aesthetic drainage solutions.

All things must change. Locate stagnant water. If water stands unchanged for more than three days, that may be sufficient time for mosquitoes to run through their life cycle. Depending on temperature and breed, most mosquitoes grow from egg, to larvae, to pupa, to adult in 4-14 days. Consider flat roofs, clogged gutters, water barrels, unchlorinated swimming pools, even bird baths as potential breeding grounds. Put lids on trash cans and cover or flip over any buckets, wheelbarrows, or canoes that can hold water.

2) Eco-Management



Blend drainage ponds with local plants and animals. In other words, let nature control its own excesses. Most counties in Maryland are now building sustainable "mini-ecosystems" around their residential drainage ponds. They're encouraging everyone to use natural techniques to control mosquitoes. Frogs, fish, and birds quickly flourish—our best means of controlling mosquitoes.

Your landscaping professional can make suggestions about what trees are best suited to reducing standing water and what will thrive naturally in poor drainage conditions.

3) Pesticides

Pesticides only work temporarily and are even harder on our friendly, bug-eating animals so a sustainable approach is usually best. If you must spray, a consumer-style outdoor fog has a lesser and shorter effect on the environment and can be used for special occasions. Long-term and repeated usages can be harmful to people especially children and elderly with lung conditions.

For more information on safe practices for our watershed, visit the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.