

National Mosquito Control Awareness Week Begins June 19

By Scott Schermerhorn

While we are finally recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, the yearly onslaught of mosquitoes and their blood-sucking bites has begun.

In recognition of the upcoming National Mosquito Control Awareness Week, June 19-26, Charlotte County Mosquito & Aquatic Weed Control and the American Mosquito Control Association have tips to help you avoid some of the bites from these vicious pestiferous and potentially disease-carrying flies.

Standing water, bare skin, excessive carbon dioxide, and dark clothing are some things that attract mosquitoes. Charlotte County Mosquito Control recommends people follow the three Ds to keep mosquitoes away:

Drain: Empty out water containers at least once per week

Dress: Wear long sleeves, long pants, and light-colored, loose-fitting clothing

Defend: Properly apply an EPA-registered repellent such as DEET, picaridin, IR 3535 or oil of lemon-eucalyptus

All residents are encouraged to engage in actions that reduce mosquito activity, protect themselves with approved repellents and promote and participate in the reduction of man-made mosquito-breeding areas found around the home. You can reduce sites on your property where mosquitoes may develop by eliminating containers that may hold water:

- drain water from un-mounted tires
- drill holes in the bottom of recycling or other containers left outside
- clear debris from roof gutters
- clean pet water dishes regularly
- empty children's toys that hold water
- stop water from accumulating on tarps or canvas covering used for boats and cars
- change the water in bird baths or water features at least once a week.

Encouraging your neighbors to also eliminate sources on their property is critical to a community-wide mosquito control program. Not all standing water allows mosquitos to breed, mosquitoes require stagnant water to complete their life cycle. If their water source is eliminated, so are their offspring.

Mosquitoes are more than just a nuisance. Some can spread diseases such as Zika and West Nile Virus, Dengue, Chikungunya, and even dog heartworm, to name a few.

While we are getting vaccinated against COVID-19, it is important to realize there are no vaccines for the diseases mosquitoes may carry in the United States. Mosquito bites and mosquito-borne diseases not only affect humans, swarms may reduce agricultural output, and some mosquito-borne diseases kill numbers of birds, reptiles, dogs, horses, and endangered species each year. Awareness of human and animal diseases, including canine heartworm, Eastern Equine Encephalitis and Western Equine Encephalitis is an important component of mosquito control.

We must be prepared to prevent mosquitoes from developing and protect ourselves through sustained, safe and effective mosquito control measures in combination with the use of approved repellents. While all mosquito control staff are working hard for you, you should also choose to protect yourself when there is mosquito activity.

For more information, please see our webpage at www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/public-works/mosquito-aquatic-weed

Readers may reach Mosquito & Aquatic Weed Control Director Scott Schermerhorn at Scott.Schermerhorn@CharlotteCountyFL.gov

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