



Springfield-Greene County  
Health Department  
*Helping people live longer, healthier, happier lives*

## **Buzz Off!**

They bite, it itches, they can give us disease – mosquitoes are a nuisance! But rainy days and warm weather often leave them with prime breeding conditions.

With just one change, you can help reduce the number of mosquitoes in your yard by eliminating their breeding grounds and habitat. This will protect you and your family from itchy bites and diseases like West Nile virus and encephalitis – diseases that cause flu-like symptoms and are easily treatable, but can also be fatal if left untreated.

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in still, stagnant water, and can breed in as little as a teaspoon of water. Check your yard for things like trash, tires, toys, flower pots, stumps or boats. Any item that can hold a bit of water can be helping mosquitoes thrive in your yard. Dump standing water and move items so that more water doesn't collect.

Bird baths and pet water dishes should be dumped and refilled at least every three days, which is the shortest time it takes for mosquito eggs to become adults. Rain barrels should be covered with a mesh screen. Boats should be stored with their drain plugs removed and tilted so the water runs to the drain. Landscaping ponds could include fish to eat the eggs and larva or a fountain to keep the water moving. Tires should be stored out of the weather and trash cans should be securely covered. Gutters should be cleaned frequently to keep water flowing.

Adult mosquitoes stay in tall grass, weeds and shrubs throughout the heat of the day. Keep your yard mowed and bushes trimmed to eliminate their hiding places.

Some low-lying areas naturally hold water and provide breeding grounds for mosquitoes. In wet weather these areas may include ditches, wet weather ponds, tire ruts, and low areas in a yard. These areas may be treated with a mosquito larvacide, containing Bti, which can be purchased at your local home improvement store. Be sure to follow the instructions on the package. Bti is also harmful to the larva of moths and butterflies, so only use Bti after you have made sure the standing water cannot be eliminated.

To get rid of mosquitoes in your yard, make just one change to eliminate their breeding grounds and habitat by dumping standing water, cleaning out gutters and keeping weeds, grass and bushes trimmed.

For more information, contact the Springfield Greene County Health Department at (417) 864-1658.