



## **A Citizen's Guide to Mosquito Control**

According to the Minnesota Department of Health, Historically, the primary Mosquito and tick viruses found in Minnesota have been La Crosse encephalitis, Western equine encephalitis (WEE), and more recently, West Nile virus (WNV). WNV is established throughout Minnesota, and will probably be present to some extent every year, whereas human infections of WEE occur more sporadically. Human disease risk will likely continue to be higher in central and western Minnesota where the primary mosquito vector, *Culex tarsalis*, is most abundant.

Mosquito populations in many areas can be reduced by eliminating larval development (breeding) sites. Larvae can develop anywhere water stands for at least 5 days. Vector species (a biting insect that transmits a disease or parasite from one animal or plant to another.) prefer stagnant water.

Homeowners can reduce the mosquito population developing on their property by following these guidelines:

1. Trimming vegetation near the home and keeping lawns mowed
2. Eliminate containers holding water- Get rid of old tires, tin cans, buckets, drums, bottles or any water-holding containers.
3. Avoiding over watering turf
4. Maintain drains, ditches, and culverts so water will drain properly, fill in tire ruts.
5. Keep roof gutters free of leaves and other debris.
6. Empty plastic wading pools at least once a week and store indoors when not in use.
7. Drain unused swimming pools and keep them dry during the mosquito season.
8. Change the water in birdbaths and plant pots or drip trays at least once each week.
9. Store boats covered or upside down, or remove rainwater weekly.
10. Make sure ornamental ponds are well maintained, and are stocked with fish.

Additionally you can take steps to protect yourself from mosquito viruses by following these tips:

1. Repair window screens.
2. Use personal protection measures to prevent mosquito bites (proper use of insect repellent and appropriate clothing). A simple fan creating a breeze around outdoor seating areas will help keep mosquitoes away.
3. Encourage dragonflies and birds to locate in your yard, both are known predators of mosquitos.
4. Some mosquitoes are attracted to lights. Reduce unnecessary lighting to make yards less attractive.
5. Be aware that "Bug zappers" do not reduce mosquito landing or biting. They attract and kill many insects but few are mosquitoes that attack humans. Many of the insects killed are beneficial because they feed on Garden pests.
6. Ultrasonic devices, such as those that claim to mimic dragonflies, do not affect mosquito activity.
7. Light-colored clothing is less attractive to adult mosquitoes. Tightly woven fabrics give some protection against biting.

Everyone can participate in mosquito control by following these guidelines!