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## **Tips for Mosquito Control**

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Although the hot weather has left Florida for a few months, the mosquitoes haven't. Not only do these pests make an afternoon unpleasant, but they also carry diseases such as West Nile Virus, heartworm, and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. Although mosquitoes will never be totally eliminated, there are things that can be done to make areas less hospitable. The following methods include both physical methods and control products.

### **Sanitation**

The first step is to not give the mosquitoes a home to breed. Take a walk around your property and think like a mosquito. Look for areas that a female mosquito would find favorable for laying eggs, such as water that is quiet and protected. Then make the area unfavorable. The following are some ways:

- Clean debris from rain gutters. The debris allows water to collect in the gutters.
- Eliminate standing water on and around structures such as flat roofs, air conditioner units, and leaky pipes and faucets.
- Get rid of water potted plant dishes, garbage cans, old tires, gutters, ditches, wheelbarrows, and hollow trees.
- Change the water in birdbaths and wading pools weekly.

## Control Products and Materials

Sometimes physical control methods may not be enough and something more is needed. There are products that can be used to control either larvae or adult mosquitoes. Before using any of these products, read and follow label instructions because some chemicals are harmful to aquatic wildlife.

### Larvacides

- B.t.i. (*Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *israelensis*) is bacteria that controls mosquito larvae (“wigglers”) and is not a threat to humans, animals, and plants. B.t.i. is commercially available as Bactomos, Teknar, and Vectobac. This product also purchased as “mosquito dunks” can be used in water that cannot be drained such as swimming pools and retention ponds. The dunks usually last about 30 days.
- Mineral oil can be added to standing water because it forms a thin film on the surface of the water, which causes larvae and pupae to drown. This is a good control method for containers and plants, such as bromeliads, that collect water.
- Methoprene is an insect growth regulator and can be used in water containing fish. The product prevents larvae from becoming adults. Read the label instructions before applying.

### Adulticides

- Malathion, temephos, and pyrethrins are chemicals commonly used to control mosquito larvae. Before using these chemicals, read the product’s label and hazard statements concerning fish and other aquatic wildlife to determine if these chemicals are right for your situation.
- Foggers may also be used to provide temporary relief from adults. Use them shortly before outside activity.
- Sprays. Treat shrubs and the lower branches of trees where mosquitoes rest. Use sprays registered for flying insects but will not harm plants.

For more information about controlling mosquitoes, please contact your county extension service. This article is summarized from the University of Florida/IFAS document “Mosquitoes In and Around the Home” by F.M. Oi and R. Anderson.