



Charleston County News Release

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County Works Overtime to Fight Mosquitoes, Public Needs to Help

Mosquito Control receives record number of calls, citizens need to empty containers that breed mosquitoes

Last week's rain is beginning to result in large mosquito populations countywide, and [Charleston County Government's Mosquito Control Division](#) needs help from the public to combat the pests.

"Employees are working seven days a week ground spraying, and several aircraft are spraying throughout the County," said Donna Odom, Charleston County Mosquito Control Superintendent. "But we cannot stress enough the importance of citizens doing their part to help eliminate mosquito egg-laying sites around their homes in order to help reduce the number of mosquitoes in their neighborhoods."

Each year, Charleston County Mosquito Control treats over 50,000 acres by aircraft and 500,000 acres through ground spraying. The young mosquitoes, or larvae, cannot live and become adult mosquitoes without water.

"So the key is to get rid of the containers that hold water around homes, yards, schools and businesses. The public must help by flushing water out of birdbaths and pet dishes with a garden hose. Keep anything that has potential to hold water, such as toys, buckets, cans and bottles, turned over and emptied," Odom said.

"In fact, container-breeding mosquitoes generate up to 30% of the requests for service our Division receives each year," Odom said. "Of these mosquitoes, the Tiger mosquito is a significant pest and can carry the [West Nile virus](#)."

The Tiger mosquito is a domestic mosquito and is closely associated with humans. Artificial containers, so abundantly provided by modern industrial society, are the major breeding sites and are essential to the production and maintenance of large populations of the Tiger mosquito.

"It is very difficult for Mosquito Control staff to reduce the number of Tiger mosquitoes because they are only daytime biters and have a short flight distance of up to 1,000 feet from where they breed. Therefore, the most effective way to control this mosquito is elimination of the breeding source by the property owners," Odom said.

Mosquitoes also grow and live in standing water in other types of areas, including ditches and low spots in yards, fields and woods. Because this standing water can't always be eliminated, Charleston County Mosquito Control routinely checks these types of areas for mosquito breeding.

"If there are mosquito larvae present, Mosquito Control employees will put a material into the water that kills only the larvae and does no harm to any other organism," Odom said.

In addition, small fish that eat mosquito larvae can be put into the water. They are called mosquito fish, and are native to South Carolina.

"All of these treatments will reduce the number of young aquatic stage mosquitoes, but there will still be some adult mosquitoes flying around," Odom said. "For the adult mosquitoes, Charleston County Mosquito Control uses spray machines on trucks to spray at night. Charleston County Mosquito Control also uses aerial treatment as needed."

Working together, Charleston County Mosquito Control and the citizens of Charleston County can reduce the mosquito population so that residents can continue to enjoy outside activities and minimize the occurrence of mosquito-carried disease.

SIDEBAR

MOSQUITO FACTS:

- A mosquito's life revolves around water; a female mosquito lays her eggs in water or in areas expected to flood.
- Once they hatch, a larvae mosquito must remain in water until it emerges as an adult approximately one to two weeks later.
- Mosquitoes can become infected with the West Nile Virus when they feed on infected birds.
- Mosquitoes can transmit heartworm disease from an infected dog or cat to a healthy dog or cat.
- Mosquitoes beat their wings 300-600 times per second, making the mosquito buzz sound.

WAYS THE PUBLIC CAN HELP REDUCE MOSQUITOES:

- Every three days, flush birdbaths, potted plant saucers and other containers that hold water
- Keep yard clean and cut
- Remove items from yard that hold water and are not needed outside
- Keep lawn and gardening equipment indoors
- Fix leaky faucets
- Keep gutters clean
- Fill in tree holes with sand or concrete
- Change pet water dishes regularly
- Chlorinate pools and clean the pool and filters
- Add fish to ponds

TO REQUEST SERVICE OR INFORMATION

- To request service or to get information on Charleston County Mosquito Control activities, call (843) 202-7880.
- For information on educational programs and presentations available from Charleston County Mosquito Control, call (843) 202-7886.
- Visit the American Mosquito Control Association's Web site at www.mosquito.org for information on various mosquito-related subjects such as home mosquito control methods, repellents and mosquito biology.

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