FIGHT THE BITE!

HOME AND GARDEN MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

West Nile virus is a disease that can be transmitted to humans by mosquitoes. The virus is carried long distances by infected birds and then spread locally by mosquitoes that bite these birds. Mosquitoes need still water to lay their eggs, which develop in 7 to 10 days. Eliminate standing water weekly and you keep many mosquitoes from breeding in the first place.

It is very rare to catch the virus, and most infected people will not even get sick or will only experience mild flu-like symptoms. However, West Nile virus can be fatal, especially to people over 50 years of age. So protect yourself from mosquito bites before doing any outdoor activities. Wear insect repellent, long pants and long-sleeved shirts to protect you from mosquito bites. Protect yourself from mosquitoes in the back woods and in the backyard!

Animals	Dogs and cats can become infected, but rarely become ill and do not spread the virus. Keep animal areas dry. Keep food and water bowls clean. A vaccine is available for horses.
Birdbaths	Clean or hose out birdbaths weekly.
BTI	A natural bacteria that kills mosquito and fly larvae yet is non-toxic to animals when used properly. Kills larvae developing in water. (See dunks below.)
Building material	Unused pipe should be kept inside or turned over so that no water accumulates.
Chainlink fence	Cover chainlink fence posts with metal or plastic caps since they are hollow pipes
Clothing	Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants when working around mosquito infested areas.
Containers	Cover containers or turn upside down so that they do not hold water including: ashtrays, boxes, buckets, cans, cups, jars and pots.
Dawn/Dusk	The times of day that biting mosquitoes are most active since they avoid the heat of day.
Dead birds	Pick up dead birds with a shovel or gloves. Double bag in plastic and dispose in trash. Dead birds should not be handled directly in order to avoid exposure to the virus. Wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.
DEET	The active ingredient in insect repellent. A 10% concentration is recommended for kids.
Drains	Keep outdoor drains flowing freely.
Dripping water	Fix leaky faucets, air conditioners and hoses.
Drought	Drought conditions may help spread the virus since birds and mosquitoes share the same few water sources, even in yards.
Dumpsters	Keep dumpsters covered, and remove any water inside and under dumpster.
Dunks	Dunks are donut-sized pellets that that kill mosquito larvae but are non-toxic to animals. They dissolve slowly in water. Available at hardware and garden stores. (See BTI above.)
Flat roofs	Inspect weekly to remove any puddles. Fix leaks from air conditioners and pipes. Keep raingutters clear of debris and flowing freely.
Irrigation	Do not overwater. Eliminate any areas of excess standing water weekly.
Landscaping	Remove plastic sheeting under bark or rock and replace with landscape fabric that prevents weeds yet allows water through.
Lawn ornaments	Should be checked for areas that hold water, and drained or flushed weekly.
Lighting	Check garden lights and eliminate water from tops of fixtures and from inside floodlights.
Playgrounds	Drill drainage holes in tire swings and playground equipment that holds water.
Ponds	Stock with mosquito eating fish. Use mosquito dunks or BTI in ponds and larger bodies of water. Follow instructions for safe use.
Potted plants	Do not overwater plants. Empty saucers weekly or flush with garden hose. Drill small drainage holes in outdoor saucers.
Pools/Spas	Maintained pools and whirlpool spas are not a hazard since pool chemicals and filters kill any larvae. Use dunks in deserted pools and spas.
Rainbarrels	Cover tightly with screening.
Raingutters	Keep gutters clear of debris. They can become breeding areas with standing water.
Recycling bins	Cut top and bottom from tin cans and flatten. Invert glass jars. Crush soft drink bottles and cans. Store newspapers on end, not flat. Drill drainage holes in bottom of recycling bin.
Screens	Install and maintain tight-fitting window and door screens.
Shrubbery	Trim and thin shrubs and bushy plants since they can be mosquito hiding areas.
Tool sheds	Keep shed roofs maintained and eliminate water around foundation.
Tires	Properly dispose of old tires. Drill drainage holes in tires used in retaining walls and in landscaping.
Trash cans	Keep trash cans covered. Remove buckets and containers from around trash areas.
Trees	Eliminate water from dead tree stumps and hollow areas of live trees. Fill cavities with sand and flush weekly with a hose.
Trash	Remove anything that can hold water including cans, cups, tin foil, plastic and paper since mosquito larvae can grow.
Umbrellas	Table umbrella and basketball bases often are filled with water. Cap tightly, seal with duct tape or fill with sand and cover tightly.
Weeds	Remove weeds, especially around areas close to water.
Wheelbarrows	Store wheelbarrows vertically or turned over to prevent water accumulation.

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