



Controlling mosquitoes in the landscape

It was a soggy May in Oklahoma. Although the moisture was much needed, that excess water also brings out what many jokingly refer to as the state bird of Oklahoma – the pesky mosquito.

After a rain, mud puddles can be a lot of fun for kids to stomp in, but that standing water is prime real estate for breeding mosquitoes. If you notice water puddling in the yard, fill in those low areas to help eliminate a place for water to collect, which will help cut down the mosquito population.

While you can't eliminate mud puddles completely, other sources of standing water can easily be fixed.

Look around the landscape for standing water in flower pots, buckets, birdbaths, patio furniture and even children's toys and empty them as quickly as possible after the rain. Keep the rain gutters cleaned out to help eliminate water building up inside. Flush the water from the birdbath a couple of times a week to help keep it fresh and mosquito-free – and besides, the birds will enjoy clean water.

If you happen to have a rain barrel for water collection, cover the top with screening to keep out the mosquitoes. Be sure to keep the screen free of debris so rainwater still will collect inside the barrel.

Something else to consider is leaky spigots. Even a small drip will allow water to collect under the faucet, creating another breeding ground for mosquitoes. Repair leaky spigots quickly.

Although they're nice to cool off in during the summer heat, backyard pools are another favorite of mosquitoes, along with fish ponds, water gardens and children's wading pools. Follow proper pool maintenance to help eliminate mosquito breeding grounds.

We all know how itchy a mosquito bite can be. When working in the garden or landscape, be sure to wear insect-repellent clothing and outdoor gear. A lightweight, long-sleeved shirt not only will help protect you from pesky insects, but also from sun exposure.

Obviously you can't completely eliminate the mosquito population from around your home. For those who enjoy spending time outdoors, you may want to consider using insect repellent.

Following these guidelines will help ensure families can have an enjoyable summer in the comfort of their own backyard.

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