

# Mosquito's

Mosquito's are a large problem all over the world and are responsible for transmission of some serious diseases, most notably West Nile Virus, Malaria, and Encephalitis. Besides being disease vectors and causing those extremely itchy bumps, mosquito's can also be difficult to contain. Breeding and reproducing in shallow, stagnant water the mosquito's have a vast range of sites to increase their population. That is why reducing, if not eliminating, any stagnant water around your home is the first step. Now, most people believe that by spraying pesticides the mosquito population in that area will be eliminated; however, did you ever consider that every other insect in that area, including those beneficial insects are killed along with them? So, as I always recommend, stay away from chemicals! I have a few organic mosquito control measures and mosquito repellent concoctions that work just as effectively and are safe for children, pets, other animals, and plants.

First, you will want to treat those areas used in breeding the pesky insect. To treat any stagnant water that you may have around your home, which you are unable to eliminate, such as bird baths, flower pots, tree holes, old tires, rain barrels, roof gutters, and other areas with standing water I suggest bacillus thuringiensis v. israelensis. Now you may say "bacillus what?!". Well, another way to remember this product is by its initial Bt. Bt is a naturally occurring bacterial disease of insects, but it remains safe for other mammals. One of my favorite products containing Bt is the Mosquito dunks that float on the top of water and slowly release Bt into the water. Once the Bt settles to the bottom of the water the mosquito larvae eat the Bt and then die. You may also want to try adding the following to standing water: instant coffee (2 tbs. per 100 sq. ft.), blended garlic bulbs (a.k.a. garlic tea), and mineral oil. To rid your home of flying insects I recommend spraying your foliage with the garlic tea, citrus oil, or hot pepper tea (1 cup ground hot pepper, 1 quart of water, and 1 tbs. of liquid ivory soap). These products assist by riding your foliage of the mosquito's that rest on the underside of their leaves. You may also look towards using citronella candles that repel mosquitos while spending time outdoors. Finally, my organic methods do not stop there... I also have a few great ideas for repellents you may use on your skin. It is extremely dangerous to use any type of chemical, including those found in bug repellent, on your children as their skin is more absorbent. Instead I look towards herbal repellents such as products containing lavender, vanilla, aloe vera, tee tree oil (also great for ticks), and eucalyptus, which are all natural, smell great, and are safe for your skin. If you are interested in making your own homemade mosquito repellent you can mix: 1 tsp. of orange oil, 2 tsp. of vanilla extract, and 8 oz. of water in a spray bottle, shake generously and then spray onto your skin.

So, when it comes to mosquitos remember that chemicals are more harmful then they are beneficial. Also, remember to treat the source first, which is standing water, and then look towards eliminating and repelling the flying insects themselves.

Cool fact: Female mosquitos are the bloodsuckers, but males do not bite and feed on nectar similar to hummingbirds.