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For more information, contact Adaven Rohling

Diversified Agriculture and Natural Resource Agent, Wildcat Extension District

adaven@ksu.edu, (620) 331-2690

Mitigating Mosquitoes

Sitting on the porch after a long day is one of my favorite ways to relax. Unfortunately, mosquitoes also like to visit our porch and can be quite annoying. Along with being annoying, some mosquitos can also transmit diseases that can affect people and animals. To reduce mosquitoes in your yard, there are a couple different approaches to controlling them that you can take.

Making changes in your yard can make the habitat less favorable for mosquitoes. Mosquitoes require water to lay their eggs in and for the larvae to grow. Reducing the amount of standing water will reduce the number of mosquitoes. Look around your yard for spots where water accumulates after it rains and get rid of objects, like old tires, that hold water or regularly dump them out. Fill in any low spots where water pools and clean out drainage ditches to ensure water can flow through them. Also, if you have bird baths or pet waterers changing the water in them at least once a week will aid in reducing the mosquito population.

If standing water cannot be eliminated, larvicides made specially for mosquitos can be added to the water to control them. Larvicide chemicals to look for include temephos (Abate), Bti, *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Teknar, Vectobac) and Methoprene (Altosid). They can usually be found at a local farm store or garden center. "Mosquito dunks" that are made from bacteria that kills mosquitos and contains *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti) can also be added to small ponds to kill mosquito larva. Another option to control mosquitos if you have a small pond is to stock the pond with goldfish or minnows that will eat mosquito larva.

Adult mosquitos like to find places that are damp, dark, and cool to rest in during the daytime. Finding tall grasses, shrubs or other vegetation is an ideal spot. Keeping grass and shrubs trimmed around the house will help deter mosquitos. Spraying shrubs and other shaded areas with a residual insecticide to kill mosquitos that try to hide in those areas is also an option. Appropriately labeled aerosol insecticide may be used. Some of the active ingredients to look for in insecticides include carbaryl, malathion and various pyrethroids (again, these ingredients usually end in -thrin).

Read the insecticide label before applying to make sure the product is used according to the guidelines and will not harm vegetation to which it is applied. While there are many mosquito traps available on the market, traps based on release of CO₂ do not reduce the

mosquito population to the level where there is a noticeable decline in mosquito numbers, and traps based on ultrasound technology are not effective for reducing the nuisance level.

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