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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

David Dugan

OSU Extension Educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources

Adams/Brown/Highland Counties

Ohio Valley Extension Education Research Area

Warm Nights Outside

The last couple of nights have been pretty warm here in the area. With that I can imagine more people spending some time outside, and of course dealing with the insects. We have been really wet in this area until the past week or so. As I type this Tuesday morning there is some rain forecasted today, and some areas have already had some rain.

With the heat and rain, there comes breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The following is from the archives and now retired OSU Extension Specialist, Dr. Dave Shetlar. Yes, he is known as the BugDoc.

Talk about mosquito season! Our friendly little blood suckers have been very busy breeding in all the standing water that has been constant in agricultural fields, roadway ditches, our home gutters and the numerous other places where water can remain for a couple of weeks.

Of course, most folks are greatly afraid of these miniature vampires because of the fear of contracting disease, especially West Nile Virus. Of course, mosquito-borne, viral encephalitis is always a danger, but most have forgotten about these native diseases! In reality, the chance of actually getting one of these diseases is very small, but signs of group fear (spurred on by media bombardment!) keep the concern level higher than it should. And, no one wants to be that ONE in a one-in-a-million chance!

So, what can be done? First, audit your own yard (and surrounding areas if you are on good terms with your neighbors!). I did this last week after being accosted by mosquitoes while picking cherries. My first obvious sighting of a problem was the rain gutter on my neighbor's garage. It had been clogged up with maple seeds (as evidenced by the hundreds of seedlings popping up!) and a couple of inches of water was present.

Then I found a REAL source! I had forgotten about a small paint bucket that I had left next to my garage! It had some old leaves and about an inch of water in it - perfect mosquito-breeding habitat. Upon approaching the bucket, I noticed an adult mosquito flying out! Peering into the bucket, I found several hundred mosquito larvae (wigglers) and a couple of pupae (tumblers) flip-flopping about the debris! I dumped the water and rotting leaves onto the driveway and took great delight watching the critters die a slow and painful (I can hope!) mummification!

Across the street, I found a large oak tree that had surface roots which had been "pruned" off by mowing. These woody knobs had rotted out and each (about three) had a pool of water. I didn't know what to do (not wanting to damage the tree any further), so I took some soil and packed it into each cavity so that the water was forced out.



On my street, we have curbs, and I saw that soil and gravel had blocked the flow of water at two points. A quick flip of a shovel got the water flowing to the drains correctly again.

If you find ditches or larger areas holding water, contact your local municipality and report it. They are aware of the mosquito problems and most will quickly repair the problem areas.

Now, what can you do to protect yourself? First, avoid being outside at peak mosquito activity time - an hour before and two hours after sun down (they are also active at daybreak). Second, if you must be in mosquito-infested areas, wear long pants and long sleeve shirts and use a repellent.

If you are getting bit about the face, apply the repellent to your hands first and wipe it on. People should wear insect repellents with DEET when planning to be outside during the peak mosquito activity times. Look for DEET listed as an ingredient on the label of insect repellents. Adults should wear products with no more than 30 percent DEET and children should wear products with 10 percent or less DEET.

How about the new traps? I have not been able to find any "scientifically replicated, field trials" of any of the new traps. These \$500 to \$1,500 traps use an array of neat sounding attractions! Most use propane to generate heat and CO2 to simulate animal body heat and breath. Some have "heart beat" noisemakers, lights to "simulate the glint of moonlight in an animal's eye," etc. While it is well known that these traps have greatly improved the catch rate for survey (by vector control agencies who monitor mosquito populations), there are NO DATA to support that having such devices in your yard will dramatically reduce mosquito bites or reduce your chances of getting a disease. I also had to chuckle at the appearance of a new repellent light. The TV ads claim that this light (you put the repellent in a chamber at the top which is heated by the light) can repel mosquitoes 10 times further away than the popular citrinella candles. Well, it's been shown that the candles don't work, so 10 times 0 is still ZERO!

Dates to Remember

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| June 28 | GAP Training for Produce growers at the Old Y Restaurant at noon. Call 393-2700 to register. |
| July 10 | Pesticide Testing at the Old Y Restaurant at noon. Must pre-register at http://pested.osu.edu or call 800-282-1955. As always, this test is offered on the second Monday of each month. |
| July 9-15 | Adams County Fair. |