

Backyard Mosquito Control

What you need to know when considering using pesticides on your property

All pest control and pesticide use should be conducted as part of an integrated pest management plan. Please review and understand the practices and principles of proper pest management before attempting any pest control work. Additional resources can be found by contacting the [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#) who have created a helpful guide to applying pesticides safely – [Guide](#), The [Virginia Office of Pesticide Services](#) - an office of the Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (VDACS), or the [Virginia Department of Environmental Quality](#).

- **THE LABEL IS THE LAW! Before applying any pesticide, read the label and understand all instructions for use. Any use or application of a pesticide not consistent with the label is a violation of federal law.**

Become familiar with the [life cycle](#) of the mosquito. Knowing how to identify the various stages will help you understand how to control mosquitoes and eliminate mosquito habitats.

When controlling mosquitoes around your home the first step is to eliminate all standing water. This is the most effective way to control mosquitoes on your property. Water that cannot be easily drained or eliminated can be treated using a biological larvicide – such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* – that is applied directly to the water.

- **Remember: Eliminating standing water around your home is the most effective way to stop mosquitoes from reproducing.**

In addition to controlling mosquitoes in water you may decide to control adult mosquitoes using a synthetic pyrethroid – such as Permethrin. Using pesticides for adult mosquito control can have many challenges. It is important to understand how to apply pesticides correctly before attempting any control efforts on your own.

- **Always use all recommended personal protective equipment – including eye protection, masks, gloves, long sleeve and long pant clothing, and appropriate footwear – when applying any pesticide.**

General applications of pesticides for control of mosquitoes should be focused in and around foliage and in and under dense vegetation where adult mosquitoes are resting during the day. Be sure to conduct all landscape trimming before application.

When applying any pesticide the amount you use is very important. Applying the correct amount as directed by the label will ensure that the most effective control is reached. Plan how much pesticide you will need and where to apply before attempting any application. Know how your equipment works and how much chemical will be applied before applying any pesticides. Underuse – or not applying enough pesticide – may not eliminate the mosquito and may have the unintended effect of making the mosquito resistant to the pesticide in the future. Overuse – or applying more than the necessary amount – may cause harm to other insects, animals or people. Overuse is also wasteful, and puts excess pesticides into the environment.

- **Remember: Make sure all equipment is working properly and always follow the label application rate.**

It is important to avoid applying pesticides to any flowering plant in order to avoid killing pollinating insects such as honey bees. Many plants have flowers that are tiny or may blend in with the plant and are difficult to see. Before applying pesticides you should conduct a thorough inspection of all plants in your yard in order to find any plants with flowers. Observe the insects in the area to help identify what plants to avoid by seeing what flowers the insects are flying to.

When possible apply pesticides before dusk. You should avoid applying pesticides during the hottest part of the day to prevent pesticides from evaporating. Dusk is also the time when pollinating insects are least active (and when some mosquitoes become more active). Do not apply pesticides before rain or on windy days; doing so may cause the pesticides to be removed from the plant surface or to drift onto property.

- **Remember: You can only apply pesticides on your property. Pesticides can drift onto neighboring properties where other property owners may not want pesticides applied.**

Do not apply more frequently than is recommended. When you are finished using the pesticide follow all label instructions for storage or disposal. More information on safe storage of pesticides can be found at <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-705/426-705.html>

If you have questions about how to use a pesticide or what pesticide to use contact a Virginia Cooperative Extension Office (703.746.5546) or the VDACS Office of Pesticide Services (804.371.6560).