

To the Editor:

Friday's Portsmouth Herald had front-page coverage of the dangers of the mosquitoes that love both our Seacoast and inland areas in our state. Here is some additional information which may help you protect yourselves from these pests.

MOSQUITOES LOVE WATER!

MOSQUITOES LOVE STANDING-WATER, as in BIRD BATHS, BUCKETS, WADING POOLS, FISH PONDS WITHOUT FISH, CLOGGED GUTTERS, TARPS, TIRES, PLANTER SAUCERS, AND ANYTHING ELSE THAT HOLDS WATER FOR MORE THAN A COUPLE OF DAYS!

MOSQUITOES LOVE FOLKS WHO KEEP LUSH, WELL-WATERED, LAWNS AND GARDENS! Great place for mosquitoes to hang out during the heat of day, or until disturbed by the faithful gardener performing his tasks.

HOW DO THEY SHOW THEIR LOVE? THEY LEAVE A GIFT OF MOSQUITO EGGS! The water may dry up, but the eggs remain, waiting days, weeks, even years – until more water revives them and the sun warms them, and they hatch into larvae, which, if not gotten rid of, become flying adult mosquitoes within 5 days, and the cycle continues!

SOME TYPES OF MOSQUITOES LOVE BIRDS! They suck the bird's blood, which may contain the makings of West Nile Virus and/or Eastern Equine Encephalitis. Those mosquitoes have the ability to process the virus and pass it on to the humans, horses, or other birds they bite.

HUMANS MUST FIGHT BACK! "The best defense is a good offense." Remove standing water where you can; use "mosquito dunks" (available at garden supply stores) where you can't. Use plantings that require less water. The obvious – don't let mosquitoes into your home, either through unprotected openings, on your clothing, or on your pets! And always be on the defense. There are many effective sprays, lotions, and garden products that protect you and your yard against mosquitoes. If DEET bothers you, there are effective botanical repellants; it is a matter of trying some until you find the one that works best for you. Most towns in southern New Hampshire do some sort of activity to control (not eliminate, as that is impossible) the mosquito population, either through larviciding, adulticiding, or both. However, in all towns there are some areas that cannot be treated. Those areas may be too close to a water source or town well for adulticiding, or may be on the resident-requested "do not spray and/or treat" list.

BOTTOM LINE: Take precautions for yourself and your children, especially at times and in areas where mosquitoes are most active. More information, as well as weekly reports of mosquito testing results, can be found on the NH Department of Health & Human Services web site <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/arboviral/>

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