MOSQUITO HABITAT CHECKLIST

Container mosquitoes are the #1 mosquito problem in Monmouth County!

WATER +7 DAYS = MOSQUITOES

Use this checklist to help you find and eliminate all the places that mosquitoes breed around your home. Any container that holds water can be a home for mosquito larvae. After 7 days, larvae will emerge as adult mosquitoes. Remember to stay vigilant and to keep containers free of standing water all year long.

COMMON HOUSEHOLD ITEMS		
☐	**Buckets**	Problem: Buckets are the most common mosquito habitats found at homes. Solution: Empty buckets and turn them over.
☐	**Garbage cans and recycling bins**	Problem: Garbage cans, recycling bins, and recycled containers can hold water. Solution: Drill drainage holes in the bottoms of garbage cans and bins, keep covered and dispose of recycling weekly.
☐	**Tarps, plastic bags and sheets**	Problem: When tarps are not fitted tightly, multiple pockets form and collect water. Solution: Keep tarps tight and refit them if water collects.
BUILDING STRUCTURES		
☐	**Gutters**	Problem: Gutters hold water when clogged with leaves or improperly pitched. Plus the leaf debris provides food for the larvae Solution: Keep gutters clean and properly pitched.
☐	**Flexible downspout extensions**	Problem: Improper pitch and ridges cause these pipes to hold water. Solution: Pitch downspout extensions so water drains completely after it rains or replace with a non-flexible extension that is pitched to drain fully. Keep the inside free of debris.
☐	**Leaky hose spigots**	Problem: Water can accumulate below the faucet. Solution: Fix leak or call a professional plumber.
☐	**Decks & Porches**	Make sure to check under decks and porches for containers that may hold water.
AROUND THE GARDEN		
☐	**Planter saucers**	Problem: If a plant saucer holds water for 5-7 days it will support mosquito larvae. Solution: Dump the water out every 3-5 days or don't use a saucer at all.
☐	**Planters without drainage holes**	Problem: Planters fill with water after heavy rains. Solution: Drill holes in the bottom of your planter – it's healthier for your plants.
☐	**Self-watering planters**	Problem: The hole used to water the plant is also used by the female mosquito to access the water and lay eggs. Solution: Tightly seal the watering hole after adding water. If this is not possible, treat the reservoir water with a Bti* product. The most effective method for preventing mosquitoes is to not use these planters.
☐	**Wheelbarrows**	Problem: Water collects in the main tub or small crevices inherent in their construction. Solution: Turn wheelbarrows over or store them on end. If crevices present, check weekly and move to empty any water you find.
☐	**Watering Cans**	Problem: Watering cans holding water for many days will attract egg laying mosquitoes. Solution: Empty and store upside down or in a garage or shed.
☐	**Rain Barrels**	Problem: Rain barrels conserve water but can also be a perfect home for mosquito larvae. Solution: Cover tops of rain barrels with tightly fitted screen. (Use nylon window screen and secure with a bungee cord or other tight elastic.) Mosquitoes will use the overflow hole to get in and lay their eggs; either plug hole or treat with a Bti* product.
☐	**Bird Baths**	Problem: Unless water is changed regularly, mosquito larvae flourish. Solution: Change water at least once a week.
☐	**Ornamental ponds**	Problem: Ornamental ponds without fish provide a great home for mosquitoes. Solution: Get fish. If that is not an option, you can use Bti* to treat for mosquito larvae.
☐	**Behind the shed & under the shrubs**	Problem: Discarded and unattended items in hard to reach spaces can collect water. Solution: Look under bushes and in overlooked spots in the yard and remove debris that can hold water.

CHILDREN'S TOYS		
☐	**Portable basketball hoops**	Problem: The fill holes in the base of a portable basketball hoop allow mosquitoes to reach the water and lay eggs. Solution: Make sure caps for fill holes are in place; replace if lost.
☐	**Kiddie pools**	Problem: Kiddie pools can become mosquito habitat if the water is not changed often. Solution: Empty or change water in kiddie pools every 5 - 7 days. Be sure to store indoors or turned over when not in use.
☐	**Sand boxes**	Problem: Water accumulates in some plastic sand boxes whether covered or not. Solution: Drill small drainage holes in the bottom of your sand box.
☐	**Big plastic toys, wagons, etc.**	Problem: Wagons, dump trucks, cars, kitchen sets, and playhouses all fill with rain water when left outside and, if left unchecked, will breed mosquitoes. Solution: Keep toys turned over or inside when not in use. If water can get inside the plastic toy so can a mosquito - drill drainage holes in the bottom.
☐	**Deflated toys**	Problem: Like a tarp, a deflated toy (kiddie pool, bounce house, etc.) will create multiple small pockets that fill with water and provide habitat for larvae. Solution: Drain off water, dry out, and store indoors when not in use.
RECREATION		
☐	**Boats**	Problem: There are many compartments on boats that can collect water. Even when a boat itself doesn't hold water there can be containers left on a boat that do. Solution: Empty all the water possible. If there is water that can't be emptied, you can treat it with a Bti* product. Cover boats in storage with taut tarps or use boat shrink wrap.
☐	**Jet skis**	Problem: The foot depressions tend to hold water and provide a mosquito breeding ground. Solution: Rinse out the foot depressions with a hose every week. Jet skis can be tightly tarped or stored indoors.
☐	**Pools/pool covers**	Problem: Pool covers and pool skimmer compartments filled with water breed mosquitoes. Solution: Treat the pool or pool cover with Bti* in the spring before you open it. If you know of an abandoned home in your neighborhood with an unkempt pool, call the Monmouth County Mosquito Control Division. It may need to be treated or stocked with fish that eat mosquito larvae.

** **A note about Bti** - Ideally, keep containers dry or discard if unneeded. If you do need to treat for mosquito larvae in a container, use the low impact pesticide Bti (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*). It is available at many hardware stores, pond supply stores and online. Bti effectively targets mosquito larvae. It can be purchased as a granule, briquette, or liquid. Be sure to choose a product that is registered with the US EPA, labeled to use for mosquito larva. Closely follow the directions on the label. You may only use these products on your property; if you see a source of standing water elsewhere, call the Mosquito Control Division.*

The Monmouth County Mosquito Control Division provides mosquito control and tick-testing services to the residents of Monmouth County. The primary strategy for mosquito control relies on an Integrated Pest Management approach that focuses on controlling mosquito larvae versus broad control of adult mosquitoes. Much of the effort is on source control-- reducing or eliminating the standing water where mosquito larvae live. This checklist can help you do your part to control mosquitoes in your landscape.

The staff at the Monmouth County Mosquito Control Division can answer your questions and concerns about mosquitoes. Contact the staff by phone or by email at mosquitoes@co.monmouth.nj.us.