



NEWS RELEASE

St. Charles County Government

Department of Governmental Communications

Lisa Dunham, Director

(636) 949-1892

Mosquito Season is Here

Residents Encouraged to Help Eliminate Mosquito Breeding Places

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Charles County — The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment asks residents to help in combat mosquitoes in 2004. Although the dry spring, followed by moderate temperatures, has delayed the emergence of a significant biting mosquito population, it is likely that mosquito abundance may increase substantially due to recent rainfalls.

Mosquitoes can develop in standing water, from eggs to biting adults, in 7 to 14 days when conditions are favorable. St. Charles County's mosquito control program is actively inspecting and treating standing water to halt mosquito development before emergence. However, there is much residents can do to help.

"An informed public, working in partnership with the health department, will produce the most satisfactory result," said Gil Copley, Director of the St Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment. "County residents can play an important role in controlling mosquito populations in their own neighborhoods by eliminating breeding areas, thus reducing the mosquito population," Copley said.

Barry McCauley, Mosquito Control Officer for the St. Charles County Division of Environmental Services, urges all residents to take the following steps:

- Collect and properly dispose of all useless artificial containers such as tin cans, bottles, buckets, vases and old tires.
- Inspect rain gutters and downspouts to see if they are blocked by leaves or other debris. Clean them out if necessary.
- Stack buckets, barrels, tubs and other open containers upside down.
- Cover all boats and canoes or store them upside down.
- Stock rock garden pools and lily ponds with small fish, including the top water minnow (the mosquitofish, *Gambusia affinis*). Empty and refill birdbaths several times a week.
- Fill or drain low places where water may stand for more than a week.
- Empty and clean small wading pools if not in use and several times a week if they are in use. Properly maintain larger backyard swimming pools.
- Drain livestock water tanks once a week or stock with goldfish or top water feeding minnows.
- Cover rain barrels, cisterns and fire barrels with 16-mesh screening.
- Store wheelbarrows and wagons upside down.

These steps, coupled with the county's larval suppression program, will go far to reduce locally produced mosquito populations. They will not, however, eliminate all mosquito problems. Not all mosquito-breeding areas are accessible and some species can fly more than 20 miles from a breeding site.



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St. Charles County conducts early evening spraying to control adult mosquitoes using a special “Ultra Low Volume” sprayer. In this program, very small amounts of insecticide are used to control the adult mosquito populations in an environmentally safe fashion.

For the 2004 season, the department will employ a crew of four mosquito-control technicians and one intern to combat the area’s mosquito population and conduct a mosquito-trapping program to assist the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services in monitoring West Nile virus. This enables the county to provide more rapid and comprehensive services to all residents.

For more information, call the Department of Community Health and the Environment’s mosquito-control section at 636-949-7900, extension 4204.

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