

ST. CHARLES COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Gil Copley, Director

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Mosquito Season is Here!

For Immediate Release

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**Contact: Barry McCauley, Mosquito Control Officer
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St. Charles County - The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is asking residents to help in combating mosquitoes in 2000. Although the dry spring, followed by moderate temperatures, has delayed the emergence of a significant biting mosquito population so far, it is likely that mosquito abundance may increase substantially due to the late-April rains we have had. Mosquitoes can develop in standing water, from eggs to biting adults, in 7 to 14 days when conditions are favorable.

The County's mosquito control program has already been out inspecting and treating as much of the standing water as it can to arrest mosquito development before emergence. However, there is much that the resident 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 part 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 in 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 in use. Properly maintain larger backyard swimming pools.
- Drain livestock water tanks once each 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, should go far toward reducing locally produced mosquito populations. They will not, however, eliminate all mosquito problems. Not all mosquito breeding areas are accessible, and some species of mosquito can fly up to 20 miles or more from their breeding sites. For these, the County conducts a program of 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 upcoming 2000 season, the County Executive and the County Council have approved the addition of a seasonal mosquito control technician. This will enable the County to provide both more rapid and more comprehensive service to all of its citizens. For more information, call 636-949-7900 ex. 4268.