

HOME and GARDEN

Keep Mosquitos at Bay in Your Home and Yard



You have likely heard about West Nile virus, but may still wonder how to safeguard against it this summer. The easiest thing you can do is keep the source at bay - those irritating mosquitoes - by preventing them from breeding.

"Prevention is the best way to battle this virus," says Dr. Colin D'Cunha, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. "Ontarians should know how the disease is spread and how to protect themselves and their families."

Mosquitoes can transmit the West Nile virus from infected birds to humans. Although there is a minimal chance of being infected and even less chance of becoming ill once infected, everyone should take precautions.

The province of Ontario and many municipalities have plans in place to reduce the number of mosquitoes and help protect us from the West Nile virus, but a helping hand from everyone will go a long way to ensuring mosquito numbers are kept to a minimum.

To transform your home and yard from a breeding ground into a safe haven, follow these suggestions:

• Drain standing water - Mosquitoes lay

their eggs in stagnant water. Once or twice a week, empty water from flower pots, birdbaths, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, swimming pool covers, wading pools, discarded tires, buckets, barrels, cans and other items that collect water. Drill holes in the bottoms of used containers so water cannot collect.

• Discard rotting debris - Damp, decaying vegetation becomes a perfect place for mosquitoes to lay their eggs. Collect lawn cuttings, raked leaves and fruit or berries that fall from trees for recycling or mulching. Clean out your eavestroughs, storm and roof gutters throughout the summer.

• Trim dense shrubbery - Mosquitoes can breed and rest in dense shrubbery, so keep shrubs well trimmed.

• Repair window and door screens - Mosquitoes can easily fly through ripped or torn screens, so to keep them outside where they belong, replace or repair damaged screens. If you do not have screens, consider keeping windows closed between the hours of dusk and dawn.

• Report dead and dying birds - Dead birds can often indicate that mosquitoes

in your area may be infected. Contact your local public health unit for instructions on whether and how to report dead birds. Do not touch dead birds without using gloves or an inverted plastic bag.
- News Canada

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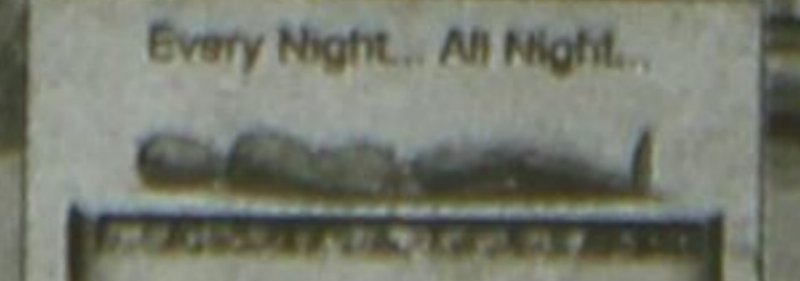
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