

# Your Yard

## Don't Let Pests Bug You Out Of Your Backyard

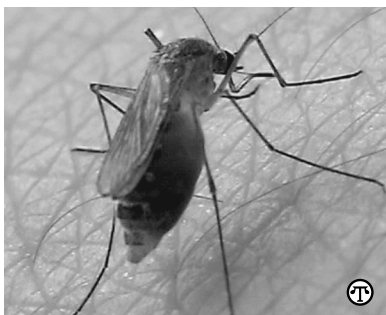
(NAPSA)—Spring and summer bring a renewal of spirit and newfound freedom from the indoors. But as you venture outside to barbecue with friends, lounge lazily poolside or work in your garden, watch out for insects that can spoil your outdoor fun.

Fire ants, the reddish-brown species named for their fiery sting, can ruin almost any outdoor activity. Fiercely protective of their colonies, these tiny pests emit alarm pheromones that signal nest mates to attack and defend their colonies by delivering repeated painful stings to an intruder, causing blisters or pustules.

In the air, bees and wasps may be the most commonly feared foes encountered by outdoor enthusiasts. Their painful stings can cause symptoms ranging from headache, fever and fatigue to vomiting, convulsions and a rapid pulse. These airborne insects can even be deadly to those who are allergic to their venom.

The ruling predatory pests of backyards across America, though, are mosquitoes. There are over 200 species of mosquitoes identified in North America, some of which have the ability to transmit diseases such as malaria, encephalitis and West Nile virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 24,000 cases of West Nile have been reported in the United States, including more than 950 deaths, since the virus was first identified in New York in 1999. Serious symptoms of West Nile virus can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, convulsions, vision loss, paralysis and even death.

“Not only are mosquitoes dangerous, but they’re also annoying, ranking among the most fre-



**Mosquitoes may be small, but they have the ability to spread infectious diseases.**

quently encountered pests in and around American homes,” says Frank Meek, entomologist and Technical Director for Orkin, Inc.

Here are some tips for protecting yourself and your family from mosquitoes:

- When outdoors, apply an EPA-approved insect repellent on clothing and exposed skin.
- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites by regularly emptying standing water from around the home in places such as flowerpots, buckets and birdbaths.
- Avoid making puddles of water around your garden when watering plants.
- Clean out rain gutters routinely. Gutters are ideal breeding sites for mosquitoes.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants while working in your garden to avoid mosquito bites.

When enjoying the weather outside, remember to be aware of your environment and protect yourself against these pervasive pests.

For more information on mosquitoes and Orkin’s mosquito service, visit [www.orkin.com](http://www.orkin.com) or call (800) 800-ORKIN. To learn more about mosquito-related diseases, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).