

Grow Tomatoes...Not Mosquitoes

Tips On How To Control Mosquitos Around The Garden

(NAPSA)—Areas in and around a garden can be ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Aside from being a seasonal nuisance, mosquitoes may carry and transmit numerous diseases, such as West Nile virus. With over 4,000 cases of West Nile virus reported by the Centers for Disease Control in 2002, it's becoming increasingly important to protect against mosquitoes and their bites.

Rebecca Kolls, Master Gardener and host of the television program "Rebecca's Garden," offers some advice for reducing mosquitoes around the garden and preventing mosquito bites.

One way to help avoid mosquito bites is to limit outdoor activity at dusk and dawn, when mosquito activity is highest, says Kolls. However, as most gardeners know, these are the best times to work in the garden. Therefore, when you're outdoors, remember to protect yourself:

- Use a DEET-based insect repellent such as Ultrathon insect repellent from 3M. Originally developed to protect U.S. troops, Ultrathon insect repellent lotion was rated the number one insect repellent by a leading consumer magazine.

- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks and a hat to minimize the areas of exposed skin.

- Consider replacing your outdoor floodlights with yellow bug lights.

The general rule of thumb is that if it can hold water, it can breed mosquitoes, says Kolls. Since gardening and water go hand-in-hand, gardeners should be on the lookout for the following:



- Be sure to empty excess water from the saucers underneath outdoor plants every couple of days.

- If left outside, gardening tools, watering cans, buckets and wheelbarrows become ideal collectors of rainwater. Therefore, bring these materials indoors after use, or turn them upside-down outside when not in use.

- Cover rain barrels with a fine mesh, such as window screening, to keep mosquitoes out.

- Holes in the garden hose and dripping outdoor faucets should be mended to prevent puddles of water from forming.

- Empty and replace the water in birdbaths every two to four days.

- Water gardens and ornamental ponds are natural places for mosquitoes to lay eggs. If you don't have fish in these ponds, consider adding them. If adding fish is not an option, change the water in the pond at least once a week, particularly when the weather is warm. Finally, keep ground cover, overhanging plants and other surrounding vegetation trimmed and away from the water surface.