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Mosquitoes

**by Stanley Rachesky
Entomologist, University of Illinois**

This year has got to be one of the worst years I have encountered regarding the mosquito. Requests from Illinois residents on how to control the mosquito have almost been overbearing. Try to cut your grass... sit on your patio... or have a backyard cook-out, and you wonder whose backyard it really is — yours or the mosquito's. No matter what you do outside, you always seem to be swatting or slapping at a mosquito.

Mosquitoes do not know where one's yard begins and a neighbor's ends. Therefore, spraying your yard will help reduce the mosquito population, but never will completely eliminate them. To help reduce the number of mosquitoes in your backyard, you must eliminate standing water in eave troughs, old tires, tin cans, children's toys, storm sewers and any other place or object that is holding water. This would definitely include the bird bath. However, it is not necessary to keep the bird bath dry, but just cleaned out at least every three days.

Apply a water base spray containing 1% malathion (mix 2 ounces of the 50-57% concentrate per gallon of water) to shrubbery and tall grass. Depending upon the amount of rainfall, repeat treatments will be necessary every 3 to 7 days.

Keep the screens, doors and windows in good repair. Tell the kids to keep the door closed, especially during the evening hours. There's nothing more ag-

gravating than having a mosquito buzzing in your ear upon retiring for the night.

Plastic resin strips containing 20% DDVP (dichlorvos) may be hung (2" x 10" size) at the rate of one strip per 1000 cubic feet of room space (LxWxH = cubic feet), or one strip per average size room. These strips will kill mosquitoes and flies for several weeks. However, do not use these strips in kitchens or in other areas where food is handled. Do not use them in any room where infants, the ill, or aged persons are confined.

A 0.1% pyrethrin space spray applied from a pressurized spray can be used for a quick knockdown of the mosquito or other flying insects in place of the DDVP resin strips. Repeated and frequent treatments will be needed during problem periods.

Repellents are one of the homeowner's best defenses against the mosquito. One of the most effective mosquito repellents is DEET (diethyltoluamide). This is available to Chicagoland residents in the form of a spray, foam, cream, and even as a towelette.

Malathion may be purchased at your local garden center. Follow label directions carefully. The actual application of malathion may be accomplished by using a hose end or compressed air sprayer.

For really quick knockdown at backyard cookouts and outdoor parties, spray the area with malathion a few hours before your guests arrive. Then use the pyrethrin pressurized spray cans and lightly treat the areas beneath tables and chairs. Don't forget now—this will not eliminate the problem—but hopefully will reduce it and make your backyard a little more enjoyable.