

June 15, 2016

CONTROLLING MOSQUITOES IN YOUR MUNICIPALITY



As summer approaches, and concerns over the Zika virus grow, DEP's Office of Mosquito Control Coordination is pleased to pass along to local government officials a few suggestions about how to reduce the mosquito population in your community.

The Zika virus is transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, a tropical, urban-dwelling mosquito. Although this species of mosquito has occasionally been found in New Jersey in very small numbers, it is unlikely to establish a permanent population in the state due to our moderate climate. But with concern growing about the Zika virus, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is working closely with county mosquito agencies (which have the lead for mosquito control in New Jersey) to ensure that they have the resources needed to identify and, if found, control this mosquito.

The most effective way to reduce much of the mosquito population (including the *Aedes aegypti* and its important relative the Asian tiger mosquito) is to eliminate their breeding grounds – standing water. Even a bottle cap filled with water can be an attractive mosquito breeding ground as they are both known as container breeders and thus prefer to lay their eggs in buckets, tires, and saucers under potted plants, for example.

Your municipal employees can help support the work of your county mosquito agencies by a few, easy-to-follow steps:

- Direct your public works personnel and your inspectors to be alert for areas of standing water as they perform their regular duties throughout the community.
- Encourage them to drain, if possible, any sources of standing water.
- If standing water cannot be drained, encourage them to report those locations to a point person in your municipal organization who can coordinate with your county mosquito control office to treat standing water that cannot be drained.
- Share with all your employees the "DEP FACT SHEET: Zika virus & New Jersey mosquitoes" which is available at DEP's web site at: www.nj.gov/dep/mosquito/docs/zika-fact-sheet.pdf

In addition, enlist your residents to join in the effort to control the mosquito population:

- Urge them to eliminate sources of standing water to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds on their property.
- Encourage them to appropriately treat ornamental ponds to prevent mosquito breeding. Mosquito "dunks," an easy to use biological larvicide (which is not hazardous to humans or other wildlife) for use in standing water that cannot be drained are available at most home improvement stores, hardware stores, or home and garden centers for about \$1.00 each.
- Suggest that they empty birdbaths at least once a week.
- Distribute the "DEP FACT SHEET: Zika virus & New Jersey mosquitoes" which is available at DEP's web site at: www.nj.gov/dep/mosquito/docs/zika-fact-sheet.pdf