

How to Get Rid of Mosquitoes in Your Yard

By Jane Purnell | Updated: December 10, 2025

Pest Control



Tall grass, dense shade, and standing water are open invitations to the ultimate party crashers—mosquitoes. To get rid of mosquitoes in your yard, start by mowing the lawn, trimming overgrowth, and draining those stranded buckets.

But let's face it, if these attractions exist in your neighbor's yard, a nearby pond, or wooded area, then you can't get rid of mosquitoes completely. So, we have further steps

you can take to *minimize* mosquitoes in your yard and create mosquito barriers around you.

For best results, combine as many of the following strategies as possible. Do not rely on one single approach. Also, keep in mind that some methods are unsafe for pollinators, such as adulticide sprays and mosquito zappers. Only turn to these approaches when absolutely necessary.

Remove standing water



Standing water is the most common breeding area for mosquitoes. Photo Credit: [toa555](#) / Adobe Stock

“The most important aspect of mosquito control that residents need to heed is to try and eliminate any forms of standing water on their properties and in their neighborhoods,” says Elmer W. Gray, Public Health Extension specialist at University of Georgia.

Here's why: Mosquitoes lay their eggs near standing water, especially water that's been standing for at least seven days. The young mosquito larvae develop in the water by feeding on lingering bacteria and other microorganisms.

By removing their breeding grounds, your yard becomes significantly less attractive to mosquitoes looking to lay their eggs.

Clear your yard of items or areas that may collect water over time, such as:

- Buckets and containers
- Clogged gutters and downspouts
- Flower pots and saucers
- Tarps and pool covers
- Recycling bins and garbage cans
- Unused, non-chlorinated swimming pools
- Low spots in the yard
- Uncovered rain barrels
- Construction areas
- Children's toys
- Tree holes
- Tires
- Swings
- Wheelbarrows

Replace water in pet bowls, birdbaths, and ornamental water features every seven days.

Use larvicides to kill immature mosquitoes

If stagnant water cannot be covered, drained, or removed, add larvicides to the water.

Larvicides are insecticides that kill larvae and pupae before they grow into biting adult mosquitoes.

To protect your local pollinators, use larvicides *before* turning to adulticides. “If we can’t eliminate the water, we larvicide,” Gray says, “and if the larval habitats are too expansive, or hard to find, we adulticide. By using this stepwise approach, we can minimize

mosquito populations prior to the need for adulticiding and possibly impacting pollinators.”

Larvicides come in many forms, including bits, briquettes, granules, liquids, pellets, and tablets.

John Schepis, an Extension specialist at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, recommended using larvicides that contain *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (BTi) in areas where standing water can't be avoided.

“BTi is a naturally occurring bacterium in soil and causes the mosquito larvae to stop eating and die,” Schepis says. “A bonus is that BTi doesn't affect mammals, birds, or fish, and is unlikely to affect non-target insects when applied correctly.”

Note: An alternative insecticide you can add to the water is Insect Growth Regulators (IGRs). Unlike larvicides, which kill mosquito larvae directly, IGRs work by disrupting an insect's development and preventing larvae from maturing into adults.

Spray adulticides



Insecticides are effective against mosquitoes, but only temporarily. Photo Credit: [Parilov](#) / Adobe Stock

As the name suggests, adulticides kill adult mosquitoes and are generally applied via spray or fogger.

The downside is that sprays are little more than a handy Band-Aid; they do not control mosquitoes in the long-term and only provide temporary relief.

Most adulticide sprays are broad-spectrum insecticides, which means they also kill beneficial insects, like butterflies, honeybees, and other pollinators.

Always read label instructions before applying adulticides. “Avoid spraying flowering plants, standing water, and pet or children’s toys,” Schepis says. “Focus the application on shaded areas, non-flowering bushes, wood fence lines, and the sides of bare structures where mosquitoes are more likely to be, and pollinators are less likely to be.”

He recommended timing the spray when pollinators are less likely to be out, such as the morning or late afternoon.

“Never apply a product on a day where there is wind above 10 mph, as this can cause the product to drift into areas that the homeowner may be trying to deliberately avoid,” he adds.

The two most common types of adulticide applications are:

Ultra-low volume (ULV) spray: This method involves releasing an insecticide as a fine aerosol mist into the air that kills mosquitoes on contact. Only small quantities of insecticides are included in the spray. The mist dissipates quickly in the air, so this method is only a short-term remedy for your mosquito problem. If you’re throwing an outdoor party and need to clear the yard of mosquitos fast, this is a convenient solution.

Residual application: This method involves applying the insecticide to surfaces where mosquitoes rest, such as vegetation, fences, and around buildings. The barrier kills adult mosquitoes for several weeks after application.

Remove dense shade

Like your party guests, mosquitoes are also drawn to the cool shade. Invite more sun into shaded areas to help deter mosquitoes from interrupting cocktail hour.

Here are a few actions you can take around the yard to minimize shade:

- **Mow tall grass** where mosquitoes love to hide.
- **Prune vegetative overgrowth**, especially woody areas surrounding the property’s perimeter. Here’s a list of [must-have pruning tools](#) to make the job easier.
- **Clear debris** that offers damp shaded areas for mosquitoes, such as leaf litter or grass clippings. Consider adding this organic debris to your [backyard compost pile](#).

Set mosquito traps



Electric traps lure mosquitoes with heat, carbon dioxide, or light. Photo Credit: [tunedin](#) / Adobe Stock

Mosquito traps are designed to trap or kill mosquitoes, typically egg-laying female mosquitoes. These traps lure the mosquitoes with an attractant that mimics a human host, such as heat, carbon dioxide, or light.

Mosquito traps that use carbon dioxide are designed specifically for blood-feeding insects, and are generally safe for non-target insects. However, traps that only rely on UV lights or heat, such as standard mosquito zappers, are indiscriminate and will harm beneficial insects.

Introduce biological controls

If you're concerned about harming pollinators, turn to biological control. A popular, widely used biological control agent is the freshwater mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*). Closely

related to the common guppy, this efficient mosquito predator loves to feast on mosquito larvae and pupae. Consider adding these swimmers to stagnant outdoor water features, like ornamental ponds.

Contrary to popular belief, birds and bats do not play a significant role in controlling mosquitoes. While these predators occasionally snack on mosquitoes, mosquitoes are so small that they're not a primary food source for these predators.

Create barriers



Mosquito netting. Photo Credit: [Wonderlane](#) / Flickr / [public domain](#)

Mosquitoes are far less annoying when they can't sink their needles into you. Put up these barriers (and encourage your party guests to do the same) to keep these bloodsuckers off you:

- **Wear bug spray:** Apply a light layer of bug spray to your skin and clothes to keep mosquitoes at bay. Choose a repellent with an [EPA-registered active ingredient](#), such as DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or picaridin.
- **Stay indoors during dawn and dusk:** Mosquitoes are most active during the early morning and early evening hours. Avoid scheduling your pool party during these hours if possible.
- **Install a mosquito net:** Cover your pergola, gazebo, or outdoor seating area with a mosquito net to keep mosquitoes out and away from the fun.
- **Run an outdoor fan:** Mosquitoes will have a much harder time reaching you when up against a blast of wind.
- **Wear light-colored clothes:** Dark colors absorb more heat, which helps mosquitoes locate a host. Throw on light-colored clothes, and you won't stick out as much.

Spread the word

No matter how much stagnant water, shade, or vegetation you remove from your yard, mosquitoes will keep coming back if your neighbors' yards have these attractions.

Gray highlights the importance of education when controlling mosquitoes in the yard. "By education, I mean trying to spread the word of eliminating standing water and getting people to take responsibility for their properties and premises," he explained.

"While there are many natural areas (marshes, river bottoms & swamps) that can produce large mosquito populations, oftentimes we produce significant nuisance populations around our own yards."

Get your community involved in your quest to eliminate mosquitoes and educate others about pollinator-friendly control measures.

FAQ about getting rid of mosquitoes

When should I spray for mosquitoes?

Spray for mosquitoes 24 to 48 hours before your outdoor event in the morning or late afternoon when pollinators are less active.

Can I install a mosquito misting system to control mosquitoes in my yard?

Mosquito systems are often installed around buildings to automatically spray insecticides at timed intervals. However, the CDC does not recommend the use of misting systems in residential areas or by homeowners.

Will planting mosquito-repellant plants keep mosquitoes away?

While some plants, such as citronella and lavender, contain oils that deter mosquitoes, these oils must be extracted from the plant (such as crushing the leaves) to take effect.

Plants don't naturally release enough repellent oils to create a barrier that keeps mosquitos away from you, and there is no reliable scientific evidence to suggest that growing these plants is an effective control method.

Are professional mosquito treatments safe for kids and pets?

Yes, most professional mosquito treatments are safe for kids and pets once the treated area has completely dried, which typically takes up to 30 minutes to an hour.

If applying treatments yourself, most products are safe for kids and pets as long as you follow the product's application instructions, do not overapply, and abide by the product's instructed wait time.

Turn to a lawn care pro

Remember, mosquitoes love to hide out in tall grass where it's cool, moist, and shaded. Hire a lawn care pro through Lawn Love to [mow the lawn](#) so that you can stay focused on planning your outdoor event.

Main Image: Use spray to fend off mosquitoes. Photo Credit: [famveldman](#) / Adobe Stock

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