

Tips for Mosquito Control Treatments



Making Informed Mosquito Control Decisions

Mosquitoes can certainly be a nuisance as we enjoy time outdoors over the spring and summer months. Here are considerations for yard treatments plus what you can do to help manage mosquitoes in your yard.

How do mosquito control treatments work?

There are two main types of pesticides that target different parts of the mosquito life cycle. **Larvicides** are applied to standing water where mosquitoes reproduce and offer the longest, most consistent control.

Adulticides target adult mosquitoes and are commonly applied as broad-spectrum sprays to vegetation and physical structures that affect mosquitoes (and other insects) when they land. These treatments typically use pyrethroid products that may remain active for several weeks and are also labeled for control of other yard and household pests. Barrier or perimeter treatments can reduce adult mosquito activity temporarily, but they do not address where mosquito larvae develop, so populations can return. Some mosquito species in Wisconsin can fly or get blown in from over 10 miles away, meaning they can overcome local treatments.

What steps can you take to manage mosquitoes in your yard?

Reducing standing water and managing mosquito habitat are the most effective ways to lower mosquito populations.

- Eliminate or minimize standing water by dumping any standing water weekly. Common sources of standing water include bird baths, kids' toys, buckets, garbage, flower pots, clogged gutters, loose or low-lying portions of tarps, and other places where water can puddle or pool.
- If you have a permanent water body like a pond, add a fountain or small pump to keep the water moving.
- Planting native plants and maintaining a healthy yard can help encourage beneficial insects like dragonflies, and support birds and other wildlife that eat mosquitoes.

What are pyrethroids?



Broad-spectrum insecticides affect many insects, not just mosquitoes. Pyrethroids are synthetic versions of pyrethrins derived from chrysanthemum flowers. Both are toxic to many beneficial insects. Some common pyrethroids are also considered PFAS compounds.



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Questions to Ask Qualified Providers

If you are considering hiring a commercial pesticide applicator to apply insecticides in your yard as a mosquito treatment, here are some questions that you can ask them first:

- ❓ Are you certified to apply pesticides in Wisconsin? (Note: proper certification ensures the applicator has the training required to safely and effectively use pesticides)
- ❓ Do you use Integrated Pest Management (IPM)? Do you inspect the property for standing water and other mosquito habitat management tactics?
- ❓ How does the product work?
- ❓ How long is it expected to last? What if it rains after the application?
- ❓ What is the re-entry interval for the product they are using? (This is required wait time after a pesticide is sprayed before people can safely go into that area).
- ❓ What is the active ingredient in the product you're using? (Be careful of "all natural" claims)
- ❓ How much product are you applying (or what is the rate for the size area you are treating)?
- ❓ What are the post-application precautions such as irrigation restrictions, allowing pets into the area, etc.?
- ❓ Can you provide a product label and safety data sheet before the application?
- ❓ How will you protect pollinators and other beneficial insects at my site?
- ❓ If you are close to water, how do you protect local water bodies?



Concerns about pollinators and other beneficial insects

Barrier or perimeter treatments are designed to remain on plants and surfaces for days to weeks, meaning their effects can persist well beyond the initial application. Insects that land on treated plants can be exposed, and in some cases, residue levels have been high enough to indicate potential risk to pollinators. Some studies have found that non-target insects, such as monarchs and honeybees, can be harmed several weeks after the original treatment. Regularly scheduled yard treatments throughout the warmer months can pose concerns for non-target insects.

For additional guidance on mosquito control treatments, see
Making Informed Mosquito Control Decisions at go.wisc.edu/Hiring-Mosquito-Services.



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