

Homeowners can take some steps to control mosquitoes around their homes

July 9 2010

(PhysOrg.com) -- South Dakota's mosquito population is back in force this summer.

South Dakota Cooperative Extension Pesticide Education Coordinator Jim Wilson said homeowners can take a few simple steps to reduce the number of mosquitoes around their homes. "Use plenty of personal mosquito repellent and wear long-sleeved, loose-fitting clothing," Wilson said. "The EPA has an excellent interactive guide to help you determine which [insect repellent](#) may be right for you." The guide Wilson mentioned is available online at this link: cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/ .

Wilson said home and landowners can consider using larval mosquito control for water sources that cannot be drained or refreshed. "Cover small containers of water, and remove weeds and vegetation around ponds," said Wilson. "Consider larval control products that spread a thin film on top of the water, or use larval control pesticides approved for use in water."

Wilson said that while adult mosquito control insecticides can be effective, individuals should only use them as needed and always read and follow pesticide label restrictions. "Portable thermal foggers and residual sprays are two ways homeowners can control adult mosquitoes with pesticides when it's necessary," Wilson said. "Portable thermal foggers that use either propane or electricity to convert an approved insecticide into a thermal or 'hot' fog are available to homeowners for use around the yard and home.

Thermal foggers only kill mosquitoes that come in contact with the insecticidal fog, which usually dissipates within hours." Homeowners can also consider longer-lasting barrier or residual treatments of mosquito resting areas, especially when outdoor events are planned. Wilson said that these treatments still offer only short-term reductions in mosquito numbers.

"Labeled insecticides may be applied with an ordinary hand sprayer, hose-end sprayer, mist blowers, or ready-to-use container equipped with a spray gun," said Wilson. "There are many insecticides that are effective on mosquitoes." Wilson suggested looking for pesticide products that are labeled for yards then look to be sure they have mosquitoes listed on the labels.

"Some pesticide products have specific restrictions limiting where they can be used," said Wilson. "Be sure you understand the requirements listed on the label and follow them closely." Making applications to grassy areas that have been cut short may not be useful, said Wilson, so landowners should concentrate on applying the insecticide to surfaces where mosquitoes will be resting during the day, such as tall grass or weeds, trees and shrubs, under decks, and the north or sheltered sides of board fences, wall siding, eaves, and outbuildings. Lawn areas that are lush, tall, or shaded may harbor mosquitoes and may need to be sprayed as well.

Wilson recommends that homeowners apply in advance of a planned activity so that the treated surfaces are completely dry before use. Always read and follow all label instructions. SDSU Extension Fact Sheet 923, "Controlling [Mosquitoes](#) Around the Home and Yard," has more detailed information. Ask for it at your county Extension office, or download your own copy at this link: agbiopubs.sdstate.edu/articles/FS923.pdf .

Provided by South Dakota State University

Citation: Homeowners can take some steps to control mosquitoes around their homes (2010, July 9) retrieved 19 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2010-07-homeowners-mosquitoes-homes.html>

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