

Review: Gadgets that really stop mosquitoes from bugging you

July 22 2016, by Jim Rossman, The Dallas Morning News

It's rare that I can test a gadget that addresses a problem faced by 100 percent of my readers, but I think we can all agree mosquitoes are a nuisance and a health hazard.

Between West Nile and Zika, illness caused by mosquito bites is big news, and I think everyone is on board with trying to keep the pests at bay.

We can all do our part by eliminating any sources of standing water in our yards and wearing repellent, but there are times when I'd rather not spray chemicals all over myself.

There are a number of gadgets that say they can help repel or kill [mosquitoes](#), and today we are reviewing two of them. One aims to repel them from your deck, and one attracts them and satisfyingly zaps them into oblivion.

One or both should be right for your yard.

—

Thermacell Mosquito Repeller

I had not heard of the Thermacell Mosquito Repeller before, but from looking around online, I saw a lot of people love the product.

I was sent an olive-colored Mosquito Repeller (\$24.99, thermacell.com). It's also available in gray, black or Realtree Xtra Green and Woodlands Camo. The hunting models cost a few dollars more.

The Repellers look like a walkie-talkie and are surprisingly simple.

They're powered by small butane cells that keep a tiny flame burning to heat up a metal grille that houses a small pad treated with allethrin, a synthetic copy of a natural repellent found in chrysanthemum plants.

I found the Thermacell Repeller works exactly as advertised. The butane cell is easy to install. It screws into the body of the Repeller. The pads come in foil to keep them fresh until you use them.

Each butane cell lasts 12 hours, and each pad lasts four hours. The pads turn from blue to white when they are exhausted.

Replacement butane costs around \$4.50 per bottle when bought in bulk on Amazon. Refills are also available at Wal-Mart. A box of four butane bottles and 12 pads provides 48 hours of protection and costs \$15.29.

The heated pads emit a faint odor, but it's pleasant. The Repeller provides a 15-foot-by-15-foot area of protection, which is about the size of the deck in my back yard.

Thermacell also sells pads that smell like dirt for hunters. There are also some accessories for hunters like a carrying pouch to keep the Thermacell clipped to your backpack.

The Thermacell is easy to carry around, even when it's lit. I never found it to be too hot to touch and never felt like it was dangerous.

The tiny flame is deep inside the unit, and it stayed lit as I moved

around. There's a small sight glass at the end of the Repeller so you can see if it's lit. I never had the flame go out while I used the Repeller.

The Thermacell is the real deal. Mosquitoes and other bugs will leave you alone when the Thermacell is running.

One thing I did notice is that the Thermacell works by creating a dome of repellent around you, so wind decreases its usefulness. You might want to adjust the placement of the Repeller to be upwind so the breeze brings the repellent over you.

Thermacell also has a line of LED camping lanterns with its repeller system built in.

—

Pros: Keeps mosquitoes away.

Cons: Refills are an ongoing cost.

Bottom line: Great mosquito protection that moves with you and doesn't break the bank.

—

Stinger 5-in-1 Mosquito Kill System

When you have a big area you'd like to keep free of mosquitoes and other bugs, a zapper is a proven way to keep the pest population in check.

If you're going to spend the money to put up a zapper, you might as well get a really good one.

The Stinger One Acre 5-in-1 Mosquito Kill System BK510 (\$70, walmart.com) seems to have all the bases covered.

The Stinger 5-in-1 has a black ultraviolet light, LED lights, thermal and octenol lures and a clog-free kill grid.

Basically the lights and the lures work to attract bugs, and the kill grid zaps them dead.

Everyone has seen a bug zapper in action. There's something satisfying about hearing the sound of mosquito frying on the zapper's electric grid.

The Stinger does a good job of keeping bugs away from your entire yard.

The lights and scents are irresistible. There is a heat source, to mimic your body heat, and an octenol lure that the bugs seem to love.

Lure packets cost \$7 and should be replaced once a month.

The Stinger is powered by electricity, so you'll need to run an outdoor extension cord to where it lives, which should be 20 feet or so away from your activity area and between you and any large sources of bugs.

There is no power switch, but there are two controls on the top to help you save electricity.

There is a dusk-to-dawn electric eye that you can cover up with a switch. So you're either running the Stinger all day, or only when the sun goes down.

There's also a switch to cycle the lights off and on, which is supposed to attract bugs that might not like the lights, but I just left the light on all

the time for my testing.

It didn't take long at all for the bugs to find the Stinger and meet their end. The next morning, its success was very evident from the bug carcasses scattered around.

The Stinger works.

I can't say it eliminates all the mosquitoes, but we did feel much more comfortable when it was in use.

—

Pros: Covers a wide area. Kills instead of just repelling.

Cons: Needs electricity where you hang it.

Bottom line: Great bug zapper that uses a variety of lures, and they all seem to work.

©2016 The Dallas Morning News

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Review: Gadgets that really stop mosquitoes from bugging you (2016, July 22) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-07-gadgets-mosquitoes-bugging.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.