

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Sumter County Ready for Mosquito Season and new Spraying Alert System**

Sumter County, FL – With warmer and wetter weather comes mosquito season, which means Sumter County Mosquito Control is monitoring mosquito activity and the response necessary as larvaciding and adulticide spray activities will increase through October/November. Mosquito production is directly associated with weather conditions such as annual rainfall, temperature, and humidity.

Sumter County residents can now receive notice when spraying will occur in their area via Sumter County alerts. To sign up, go to [www.sumtercountyfl.gov/alerts](http://www.sumtercountyfl.gov/alerts) to register for weather and mosquito spraying alerts.

Spraying (adulticiding) operations occur nightly in different zones of the county, determined by adult mosquito light trap counts, landing rates, and identification submitted by citizen complaints. The Mosquito Control Division annually receives numerous requests for control of aquatic midges (blind mosquitoes). While aquatic midges are a nuisance, they do not bite, take blood, or carry/transmit disease; therefore, the focus is only on mosquitoes that can carry and transmit disease.

While Sumter County is not currently experiencing any mosquito-borne disease activity, the Mosquito Control Division wants to advise citizens to remain vigilant by taking these steps to avoid contact with mosquitoes:

- Remove standing water in old tires, buckets, drums or any other container.
- Clean clogged gutters and flat roofs that may have poor drainage.
- Empty plastic wading pools, birdbaths and pet water bowls at least once a week.
- Drain water from boats being stored.
- Fill in tree holes and hollow stumps that hold water.
- If you have an ornamental water garden, stock it with mosquito-eating fish (Gambusia, minnows or goldfish).
- Repair screening on windows, doors, porches and patios.
- Drain water from old pools not in use.

Also follow the 5 Ds to best protect yourself:

- Dusk and Dawn. Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are seeking a blood meal. For many species, their favorite feeding time is during the dusk and dawn hours.
- Dress. Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and a long sleeve shirt when outdoors for long periods or when mosquitoes are most active. Clothing should be light colored and made of tightly woven materials to keep mosquitoes away from the skin.
- Drain. Reduce the amount of standing water in or near your property by draining and/or removing it.

- Deet. Use an insect repellent containing Deet. Spray clothing with repellents containing permethrin or Deet because mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing. Always read the manufacturer's directions carefully before you put on a repellent.

Mosquitoes are more prevalent in wooded and swampy areas. Use Deet before going into high-risk areas or when outside during high-risk times. The most effective protection are products containing at least 20 to 30 percent diethyltoluamide (Deet). Follow the directions carefully and do not over apply. Children under 5 years old, adults over 55, and those with weakened immune systems are most vulnerable to mosquito-borne illnesses and should take extra precautions following the 5 Ds.

Animals also can suffer from mosquito-borne illnesses. Proper vaccination of horses will protect them from contracting Eastern Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus. Your pets also can be at risk. Mosquitoes can transmit canine/feline heartworms. See your veterinarian and place your pets on a heartworm preventative medication.

If spraying is cancelled, it's usually due to several different factors, which can be winds greater than 10 mph; temperatures cooler than 50 degrees F; rainy weather; or adult mosquito surveillance not meeting required thresholds for spraying.

If you have any questions, concerns, or requests for mosquito control operations in your area, please call Sumter County Mosquito Control at 352-689-4400.

[www.sumtercountyfl.gov](http://www.sumtercountyfl.gov)

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