

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## DEP REMINDS RESIDENTS TO ELIMINATE STANDING WATER ON PROPERTIES TO REDUCE MOSQUITO POPULATION

(18/P62) TRENTON - With a wet spring coupled with the arrival of a hot summer, the Department of Environmental Protection is reminding property owners of common-sense steps they can take to help reduce mosquito populations and the risk of mosquito-borne illnesses, Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe said today.

"Protecting public health from disease-carrying mosquitoes is a very serious priority," Commissioner McCabe said. "In addition to measures taken by local and county mosquito agencies, we urge the public to diligently remove standing water from their properties and follow other measures that will reduce the risks of being bitten or becoming ill."

New Jersey's 21 county mosquito control agencies use a variety of methods to combat mosquitoes, including public awareness campaigns, larval habitat source reduction programs, use of natural predators, and judicious application of approved insecticides by ground and aerial means to manage mosquito populations and reduce the threat of disease transmission.

To date this year, early season mosquito testing reveals that both Eastern Equine Encephalitis and West Nile virus are circulating within mosquito populations in New Jersey. Even with dry weather, diseases can be spread as mosquitoes and birds share the same water sources, making it even more important for the public to remove sources of standing water in their yards that can serve as mosquito breeding grounds.

"With increased temperatures these past few weeks numerous mosquito samples from across the state have been confirmed to be carrying West Nile virus," Office of Mosquito Control Coordination Administrator Scott Crans said. "County programs are using this valuable information as an 'early warning system' to direct local resources efficiently while working diligently to minimize the threat of disease transmission."

The New Jersey Department of Health also reminds the public that its assistance in eliminating mosquito breeding areas is critical.

"As New Jersey moves through mosquito season, it is important to remember that reducing exposure to mosquitoes is the best defense against mosquito-borne viruses like West Nile virus and travel-associated viruses like Zika and dengue," said Department of Health Commissioner Shereef Elnahal.

Residents, business owners and contractors can take these steps to reduce mosquito populations on their properties:

- \* Empty water from flower pots, pet food and water dishes, birdbaths, swimming pool covers, buckets, barrels and cans at least once or twice a week.
- \* Clear clogged rain gutters.

- \* Check for and remove any containers or trash that may be difficult to see, such as under bushes, homes or around building exteriors.
- \* Use EPA-registered insect repellents when outdoors and wear protective clothing.
- \* Stay in air-conditioned places or rooms with window screens that prevent access by mosquitoes.
- \* Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers that have accumulated on your property.
  
- \* Drill holes in the bottom and elevate recycling containers that are left outdoors.
  
- \* Repair and clean storm-damaged roof gutters, particularly if the leaves from surrounding trees tend to clog drains. Roof gutters can produce millions of mosquitoes each season.
  
- \* Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
  
- \* Avoid allowing water to stagnate in bird baths.
  
- \* Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish. Water gardens become major mosquito producers if they stagnate.
  
- \* Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, including those not in use. An untended swimming pool can produce enough mosquitoes to result in neighborhood-wide complaints. Be aware that mosquitoes may even breed in the water that collects on pool covers.
  
- \* Repair and maintain barriers, such as window and door screens, to prevent mosquitoes from entering buildings. Barriers over rain barrels or cistern and septic pipes will prevent female mosquitoes from laying eggs on water.

To learn more about the New Jersey Mosquito Control Commission and for links to county commissions, visit [www.nj.gov/dep/mosquito](http://www.nj.gov/dep/mosquito) For more information on how to prevent mosquito bites and illness, or to mosquito-proof your home and yard, visit [http://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/faq/mosquito\\_checklist.pdf](http://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/faq/mosquito_checklist.pdf) or <http://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/vectorborne/C2506--Mosquito-borne%20Diseases%20Brochure.pdf>