

Effective Mosquito Control

April through September marks the mosquito season in Central Texas. Not only are mosquitoes irritating to people and animals, they may also carry several diseases of public health concern including West Nile Virus (WNV). Samples collected over the last several years have shown a significant population of the mosquito species that can carry West Nile Virus (WNV). Residents of The Hills can do a lot to help reduce the level of mosquito activity in your neighborhood by:

- **Eliminating** all standing water on your property, including clogged rain gutters;
- **Maintaining** swimming pools both in and above ground to prevent stagnant conditions that provide ideal habitat for mosquito breeding;
- **Emptying and turning over** small plastic wading pools when not in use;
- **Removing** junk, debris, plastic coverings, tires, bottles, cans and any other objects capable of holding water (a small amount of water can produce a large number of mosquitoes);
- **Draining** water from flowerpots, birdbaths, rain barrels, pet dishes, livestock watering troughs, etc. every three or four days;
- **Mowing** tall grass or reducing the amount of brush and other vegetation in your yard including areas between your fence and creek or drainage easement, etc. (this reduces resting sites for adult mosquitoes);
- **Repairing** leaky pipes, outside faucets and periodically moving drain hoses to prevent standing water.

The following websites are good resources for mosquito control:

- [American Mosquito Control Association: Mosquito Information](#)
- [Texas Department of State Health Services: West Nile Virus Information](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: West Nile Virus Information](#)

Natural Remedies for Repelling Mosquitoes

Plants can also be used for those looking for a more natural way to repel these bugs. Try planting these plants in your garden to repel mosquitoes.

Catnip

Although catnip may make your yard more appealing to stray cats, it's also a very effective mosquito repellent. Some studies show that the oil from this plant is 10 times more effective than the chemical DEET. Ideal places to plant catnip include on your deck and around your patio.

Marigolds

Marigolds have a unique smell that many insects, including mosquitoes, find offensive. They thrive in direct sunlight and work well when planted in gardens with a lot of natural light.

Rosemary

This pot-growing herb gives off an oil that's mosquitoes dislike. Once mosquito season is over, you can use this herb in your cooking.

Citronella Grass

Citronella grass, also known as the mosquito plant, is a tropical plant that grows six feet tall. Manufacturers grow these plants and distill the citral from the blades to use in mosquito repellents and other items such as scented cosmetics and food flavoring. But you can plant this grass in your backyard as a natural skin repellent if you have the room. Grooming may be necessary to keep it looking neat.

Ageratum

Another lovely bedding plant for detouring mosquitoes is Ageratum. It blooms pale blue and white flowers and is great for bedding plants. Ageratum produces Coumarin which is commonly found in commercial repellents but it is not dangerous and therefore makes a great mosquito repellent.

A few other herbs that repel mosquitoes:

- Basil
- Lavender
- Lemon Balm
- Lemongrass
- Cedar
- Sagebrush
- Bee balm/bergamot
- Onion
- Garlic
- Tansy
- Peppermint
- Horsemint
- Eucalyptus

Effective mosquito control not only helps to control mosquito population levels, thereby reducing or preventing outbreaks of several mosquito-borne diseases of public health concern in Texas including encephalitis, West Nile virus, dengue fever and dog heartworm, but it also serves to enhance the enjoyment of outdoor activities by all citizens of the community.