

Experts Predict “Mosquito Summer from Hell”

Record-setting floods in the Mississippi River basin and abnormally high rainfall amounts in the Northeast, Great Lakes, Midwest and throughout the Pacific Northwest have resulted in a wet, soggy springtime in much of the US.

All of this flooding and heavy rainfall means lots of standing water where mosquitoes can breed — just as the weather warms up for the annual mosquito season. That’s why top mosquito control experts are expecting the summer of 2011 to be the worst mosquito season in decades.

“The heavy rains bode for a bumper crop of mosquitoes,” according to Joseph Conlon, technical advisor for the American Mosquito Control Association.

Another expert is more emphatic. “This is going to be the mosquito summer from hell,” said Jon Cohen, mosquito control expert and president of Summit , which makes [Mosquito Dunks®](#) and other mosquito control products. “The standing water left in the aftermath of the floods and heavy rains will provide an abundance of breeding opportunities for mosquitoes.”

As summer heats up and mosquitoes begin to breed, consumers will be actively seeking products that kill and repel mosquitoes. Sales of [Mosquito Dunks](#), the nation’s best-selling biological mosquito control product, are expected to be particularly strong this year. The active ingredient in [Mosquito Dunks](#) is called B.t.i. (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*), a bacterium that naturally kills mosquito larvae but is harmless to other living things. When placed in ponds, ditches, rain gutters, birdbaths and any area where water collects, [Mosquito Dunks](#) will kill mosquito larvae for up to 30 days.

To control adult mosquitoes, insecticidal sprays can be used to keep insect pests out of yards and gardens. Many of today’s mosquito sprays use less environmentally toxic active ingredients to kill biting mosquitoes. Summit’s [Mosquito & Gnat Barrier](#), packaged in a convenient hose-end sprayer, contains permethrin, an insecticide that kills insects and repels a wide variety of insect pests including mosquitoes for up to four weeks.

“Spraying a backyard can help to reduce suitable mosquito resting areas in landscape vegetation and therefore reduce the chances of being bitten by mosquitoes and other insects,” said Cohen. “Spraying the wooded areas that your dog frequents can also aid in reducing the risk of tick-borne illness for pets and humans.”

Homeowners are advised to be vigilant in eliminating places where water can collect and stand in their yards and gardens. “Mosquitoes can breed in a coffee cup of standing water in less than a week,” says Cohen.

Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, old tires and other items that can collect water. Turn over wheelbarrows and empty children’s wading pools. Clean clogged roof gutters, which can become prime mosquito-breeding pools. Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors. Periodically empty the saucers under ceramic pots to make sure they are not harboring mosquito larvae.

Experts Predict “Mosquito Summer from Hell”

To reduce the chances of getting mosquito bites, limit your outdoor activities during the times of day when mosquitoes are most active—an hour before and after dawn and an hour before and after dusk. To repel mosquitoes, use a product containing DEET, which sets the standard by which all other repellents are judged.

Also, don't forget that clothing is an excellent barrier between you and a mosquito. Wear clothing that will protect more of your body, such as long-sleeved shirts and long pants, especially during the evening hours.

“If you're outside and not wearing repellent when the mosquitoes begin hatching out, you'd better be wearing your 'big boy' pants because you're going to need them,” said Conlon.

Mosquito Dunks® is a registered trademark of Summit Chemical Company headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland.

Photo Caption:

The key to controlling mosquito populations is eliminating or treating standing water where they lay their eggs. [Mosquito Dunks®](#), which look like small beige donuts, kill mosquito larvae before they can become biting, disease-carrying adults. The active ingredient in [Mosquito Dunks®](#) is a naturally occurring bacterium that is deadly to mosquito larvae but harmless to other living things.

