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Keep Mosquitoes At Bay In Your Home And Yard

By News Canada

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by: **News Canada**

(NC)—You have likely heard about West Nile virus, but may still wonder how to safeguard against it this summer. The easiest thing you can do is keep the source at bay - those irritating mosquitoes - by preventing them from breeding.

"Prevention is the best way to battle this virus," says Dr. Colin D'Cunha, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. "Ontarians should know how the disease is spread and how to protect themselves and their families."

Mosquitoes can transmit the West Nile virus from infected birds to humans. Although there is a minimal chance of being infected and even less chance of becoming ill once infected, everyone should take precautions.

The province of Ontario and many municipalities have plans in place to reduce the number of mosquitoes and help protect us from the West Nile virus, but a helping hand from everyone will go a long way to ensuring mosquito numbers are kept to a minimum.

To transform your home and yard from a breeding ground into a safe haven, follow these suggestions:

Drain standing water - Mosquitoes lay their eggs in stagnant water. Once or twice a week, empty water from flower pots, birdbaths, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, swimming pool covers, wading pools, discarded tires, buckets, barrels, cans and other items that collect water. Drill holes in the bottoms of used containers so water cannot collect.

Discard rotting debris - Damp, decaying vegetation becomes a perfect place for mosquitoes to lay their eggs. Collect lawn cuttings, raked leaves and fruit or berries that fall from trees for recycling or mulching. Clean out your eavestroughs, storm and roof gutters throughout the summer.

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Trim dense shrubbery - Mosquitoes can breed and rest in dense shrubbery, so keep shrubs well trimmed.

Repair window and door screens - Mosquitoes can easily fly through ripped or torn screens, so to keep them outside where they belong, replace or repair damaged screens. If you do not have screens, consider keeping windows closed between the hours of dusk and dawn.

Report dead and dying birds - Dead birds can often indicate that mosquitoes in your area may be infected. Contact your local public health unit for instructions on whether and how to report dead birds. Do not touch dead birds without using gloves or an inverted plastic bag.

For more information, call the Ontario Ministry of Health INFOLine at 1-877-234-4343 (toll free in Ontario only), TTY 1-800-387-5559. In Toronto, call (416) 314-5518. You can also visit the website

www.HealthyOntario.com or call your local public health unit.

Little things make a difference. Anything you do to prevent mosquitoes from breeding means you will have less to worry about in the weeks and months to come.

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A Few Basic, Useful Plants

By Gabriel Adams

What were going to try to do is explain some of the more useful plants and trees you can put in your yard. The idea will be to provide a beautiful yard and garden while making it worthwhile to keep up.

One of the most useful types of plants you can find is herbs. Weather it be thyme, basil, or catnip you can find a variety of uses for your herbs. One of the most basic uses for herbs is in cooking. They provide flavor to otherwise bland food.

Another good type of plant is fruit trees. By planting fruit trees you will be able to get some shade to your yard while also getting some fresh fruit. This comes as a nice break for most people considering grocery store prices.

You can also plant the famous citronella plant. This will help keep bugs and mosquitoes out of your yard.

The aloe vera plant is useful incase you get a sunburn. All you need to do is break one of the stems apart and rub the goo onto your burn spot. This will help your skin feel cool and the burn to heal faster.

Depending on climate you can plant sugar cane around your yard. This will provide a nice natural

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barrier depending on how much you plant plus it tastes good. When you peel back the part you can chew on the sweet center of the plant, hence its name of sugar cane.

There are also many types of bushes you can plant around your yard. You can do this for beauty or get some bushes with spiny leaves for protection. It is recommended that you don't plant large bushes under your windows because burglars will use them to hide in while they break into your home.

Lastly, you should consider flowers. Planting the right type of flowers in your yard will attract helpful insects which can keep your garden healthy. As an added bonus flowers can look and smell good too.

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