

In Florida, containers can breed a variety of mosquitoes. One such species is *Aedes aegypti*. Historically, *Aedes aegypti* is considered to be a primary vector of viral diseases such as the dengue fever, chikungunya and yellow fever. Another species is *Culex nigripalpus*, which is the primary vector for St. Louis encephalitis and West Nile Virus. Protect yourself and neighbors by preventing mosquitoes from breeding in containers.



*Aedes aegypti*

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Lee County citizens experiencing problems with mosquitoes should contact the Lee County Mosquito Control District at (239) 694-2174 or go to [www.lcmcd.org](http://www.lcmcd.org) and click on make a service request.

Lee County Mosquito Control District is committed to improving the quality of life, facilitating outdoor activities and protecting the public health in our community by implementing environmentally sound practices that control mosquitoes throughout Lee County.

#### Lee County Mosquito Control District

15191 Homestead Road

Lehigh Acres, FL 33971

Mailing Address:

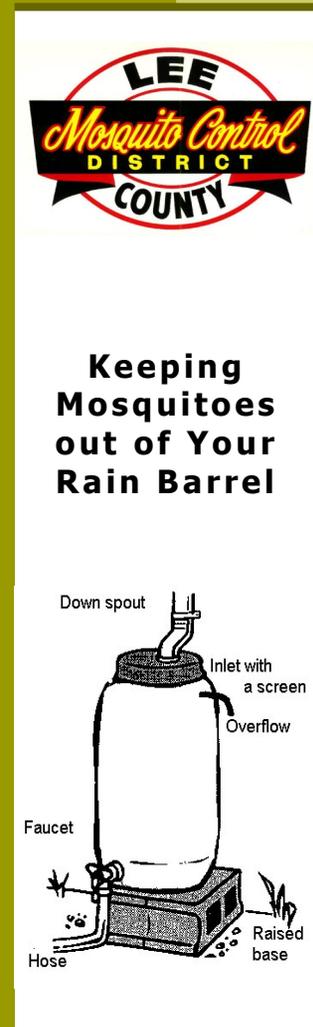
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## Avoid Raising Your Own Mosquitoes



*Culex* larva

In Florida, there are approximately fourteen species of mosquitoes typically associated with man-made containers. Unfortunately, many container breeding mosquitoes are capable of transmitting mosquito-

borne disease. It is important to take steps to prevent raising mosquitoes on your property.

Container breeding mosquitoes such as *Culex nigripalpus* lay their eggs on the surface of water. Other container breeding mosquitoes, such as *Aedes aegypti* will lay their eggs on the walls or border of a container that will be covered with rain at a later date. Normally, Lee County Mosquito Control District recommends dumping any container that holds water for more than 5 days; however, that would defeat the purpose of collection rainwater for later use.

## Controlling Mosquitoes in a Rain Barrel

Container breeding mosquitoes will search for still water. A rain barrel is an ideal habitat for mosquitoes. There are many ways to keep mosquitoes from developing in your rain barrel. The following are six ways to prevent mosquitoes in a container:

1. **Source Reduction:** If you completely use the water within 5 days, the mosquitoes will not have enough time to develop. If you do not use all of the water, even leaving a few tablespoons of water, use another method. One tablespoon of water can breed over 200 mosquitoes!
2. **Exclusion:** Cover the top of an open barrel with tight screening. This will prevent adult mosquitoes from laying their eggs on the water or sides of the barrel. You must also cover the intake opening. This can be done with screening or nylon pantyhose. Just be sure to monitor the hose as it can become clogged or develop holes.
3. **Bacillus thuringiensis var. israelensis (B.t.i.)** is a naturally occurring soil bacteria known as a biopesticides. B.t.i. can be added to barrels or large containers than cannot be screened. Products such as Mosquito Dunks slowly release the bacteria in the water. The mosquito larvae feed on the bacteria and die. For smaller areas, B.t.i. bits are available. The B.t.i. is not harmful to people, birds, fish, animals or vegetation when used as directed and controls mosquitoes for approximately 30 days. Mosquito Dunks can be purchased at garden centers, hardware stores and home improvement stores.
4. Methoprene is another biopesticide, which is an analog of insect growth regulators which prevent mosquito larvae from maturing into adult mosquitoes. Methoprene is sold at pet stores and garden centers as Zodiac®. These granules generally control mosquito larvae for 21 days. When used as directed, it will not adversely affect humans, animals, birds, fish or vegetation.
5. **Suffocation:** Another way to keep mosquitoes from using your rain barrel is keep a layer of oil on top of the water. Mix a drop of dish soap with a small amount of vegetable oil pour on the surface of the water. The oil will prevent the larvae from effectively breathing atmospheric oxygen. The oil must be reapplied every few days and wind may push it to one side allowing mosquitoes to avoid the oil.
6. Some gardeners have found keeping small fish in the barrel controls mosquito larvae. The fish may need supplemental feeding when larvae are not present and they will need oxygen exchange so do not close the barrel.