

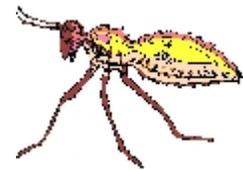
## **Mosquito Concerns**

Mosquitoes have taken on a greater concern in the public eye recently, due to the presence of West Nile Virus. The City has taken measures to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus to its residents. There are also many things residents can do to protect themselves and their families from the threat of West Nile Virus.

**Mosquitoes have always been a nuisance insect. However, with the recent West Nile Virus concerns,** there is a heightened concern to eliminate mosquito populations. We have provided here information about mosquitoes in general, but most specifically about West Nile Virus mosquitoes.

### **Q: Do all mosquitoes carry West Nile Virus?**

A: No, there are 53 known mosquito populations in the state of Wisconsin. Only one of those is the main carrier of the West Nile Virus (WNV), the **Cultex mosquito**.



### **Q: What can you do to help fight mosquitoes at your home?**

A: Cultex mosquitoes only lay their eggs in shallow stagnant water. They typically fly only 1/4 mile from where the hatch. Therefore, eliminating shallow, stagnant water will eliminate the breeding grounds for the Cultex mosquito; this can be done in many ways:

- Empty standing water in buckets, plastic covers, toys or other items mosquitoes may live and breed in.
- Dispose of old tires or store indoors.  
Note: One tire can produce up to 500 mosquitoes!
- Check for water in plastic tarps over pools and boats.
- Fill in drain puddles, ruts in your yard, hollow tree stumps, etc.
- Water in swimming pools should be circulating if possible.
- Keep your rain gutters unclogged.
- Keep ditches and culverts free of weeds and trash.
- Empty and change water in birdbaths, potted plant trays, and wading pools at least once a week.
- Make sure window and door screens are bug tight.
- Replace outdoor lights with yellow "bug lights"

### **Q: How is the City of River Falls avoiding the breeding of mosquitoes?**

A: Mosquitoes do not breed in deep ponds. They breed in shallow areas of water. The current standards of the City of River Falls call for storm water ponds to be at least four feet deep. These ponds attempt to mitigate the effects of development, such as erosion problems, increased water pollution, destruction of stream habitat, and decreasing groundwater recharge.

The dry ponds and infiltration ponds within the City are designed to drain in 48 hours. When the ponds take more than 2 hours to drain, they will be scheduled for maintenance to restore the design infiltration rate of 48 hours. Typically, mosquito larvae require four days (96 hours) to fully develop.

The City hopes these ponds will provide a very natural look and feel to City neighborhoods. Native, no-mow grasses are used to enhance the natural feel as well as to provide habitat for natural predators of mosquitoes, such as birds, bats, dragonflies, frogs and other amphibians.

**Q: How can you personally reduce your risk to WNV?**

A: It is impossible to eliminate all habitats for mosquitoes, however, there are some easy measures you can take to protect yourself:

- Limit your time outdoors at dawn and dusk during the mosquito season (June-September)
- Wear shoes, socks, long-sleeve shirts and long pants when outdoors.
- Apply insect repellents with DEET to exposed skin when outdoors.
- Spray clothes with insect repellents to deter mosquitoes from biting through them.

**Q: What about chemical treatments?**



l into this option for shallow ponds. The WI Department of Natural Resources (DNR) states that it is illegal for anyone to place a pesticide in non-containerized standing water without a permit. Due to potential environmental impacts of chemical treatments, permits require in-depth monitoring and supporting evidence for approval. In fact, there is only one approved mosquito control district in the region and that is in La Crosse, due to the vast flood plains

of the Mississippi River, and the many wetlands and marshes present there. (For a copy of the DNR info sheet, please stop by City Hall)

**Q: Can you stock the ponds with fish?**

A: In this climate in order for fish to survive the winter freeze, the ponds must be 8-10 feet deep. Since mosquitoes lay their eggs in shallow water, ponds where fish can survive should have minimal mosquito problems anyway.