

Mosquito Surveillance Starting in York County, Pennsylvania for 2017

Penn State Extension – York County West Nile Virus Program will start performing county-wide mosquito surveillance the beginning of April for the 2017 season. During the 2016 season mosquito trapping in York County collected over 140,000 adult mosquitoes and included 24 different species. For 2016, only 139 mosquito samples tested positive for West Nile virus versus 2015, when 375 samples tested positive. The York County West Nile Virus Program performs mosquito surveillance and response in accordance with CDC and PA Department of Environmental Protection procedures and recommendations to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus, Zika Virus and other mosquito vector diseases. The most common sources of high mosquito populations in residential areas continues to be from unmaintained swimming pools, yard clutter and litter. Residents, farmers, businesses, municipalities and school districts can greatly reduce mosquito concerns and related human health risk by cleaning up their own property and supporting local community cleanups. We recommend participating in the 2017 Great American Cleanup of PA (www.gacofpa.org) going on now through May 31st.

Sixteen years of surveillance in York County indicates that the most common mosquito species in residential areas; the House Mosquito (*Culex spp.*) and the Asian Tiger Mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*); are primarily produced from artificial containers left behind by humans. Artificial containers can be something small like a bottle cap to sometimes as large as a swimming pool with shallow water. Additional containers such as tires, buckets, tarps and roadside trash are preferred by mosquitoes because other predators found in nature that would prey on mosquito larvae are not present. During periods of drought these containers continue to hold water and produce mosquitoes. One bucket or tire in someone's backyard can produce thousands of mosquitoes in a year.

We also want to remind residents, municipalities, school districts and police departments that mosquito traps are not to be confused for explosive devices. Traps are routinely placed throughout York County from April through October to monitor mosquito populations. Traps are labeled with contact information. (A flyer is attached with images showing what mosquito traps look like.)

York County residents can report mosquito concerns through the Pennsylvania West Nile Virus website www.westnile.state.pa.us. Doing so will better assist our program to document areas of concern and protect public health. Your local municipality is responsible for addressing property maintenance issues and approves stormwater management systems. Public school districts should be practicing and teaching Integrated Pest Management (IPM), an approach to pest control that focuses on pest prevention by eliminating the root causes of pest problems. Everyone has a responsibility to help prevent and eliminate mosquito concerns!

For information about West Nile Virus and Zika Virus symptoms in humans, contact the Pennsylvania Department of Health at 1-877-PA-Health.

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