

MOSQUITO CONTROL UPDATE

With the unusually high water and consistent rains late spring through early summer the mosquito population exploded to levels not seen in many years. Following will be information on actions the City of Forsyth is taking and some general information on mosquitoes and why there should be a decline soon on their numbers.

Most years the City sprays 3.5 -4 gallons of Evoluer 4-4, which is a contact only spray and has no smell, per week within the city limits of Forsyth using a legally calibrated unit and licensed applicator.. This year there has been twice a week spraying with a high setting on the machine relating to 5.5- 6 gallons chemical per evening for a total of 11-12 gallons total per week. This is over a 300% increase. Current evenings the City tries to spray on are Tuesday and Friday. The schedule can change depending on weather. Spraying calls for a consistent 4-8 mph wind, which is never the case, and a travel rate of application of 15 mph. Spraying this year so far has been done on June 21st and 29th and July 2nd, 5th, 8th as well as a spot spray for the fireworks on the evening of July 2nd and again for Shakespeare in the Park on July 7th.

Now for a little information on mosquitoes themselves. Statewide there are at least 45 species of mosquito. 80-85% are floodwater mosquitoes and the rest are standing water mosquitoes. Under optimum conditions these mosquitoes can go from an egg, hatch, become an adult, feed and lay eggs within 11 days.

Standing water mosquitoes lay their eggs in the water and will continue to reproduce as long as there is stagnant warm water, but once again this is about 15% of the total. Some of these standing water mosquitoes can reproduce in as little as a water bottle cap as long as it has water for 4 days.

Where there is hope to see a decline in numbers is with the approximate 85% floodwater mosquitoes as they lay their eggs on the wet dirt right above water line as the water in areas decline. As we had fairly consistent rains for a few weeks water would drop allowing egg laying and then raise again to flood eggs for hatching. As summer heat sets in it should bring a steady decrease to water areas and leave eggs out of water. The bad news is that eggs can survive for up to 5 years waiting to get flooded again and that is why with the high water this year it hatched many years worth of eggs in a short time.

Many species of mosquito will move up to 2 miles in 24 hours on a breeze and some up to 20 miles total over time. Why this is important is because no matter how much spraying is done with the habitat around Forsyth, and especially on a wet year, you can kill a lot of mosquitoes and still have a large influx with any breeze almost overnight.

What everyone can do to get through this is wear light colored and loose fitting clothes. Use repellent, many types are available and with a search there is a lot of information on all natural repellents to make at home. Limit your time outdoors during dusk and dawn, this is the main time the approximate 85% floodwater mosquitoes feed, the 15% or so standing water mosquitoes are more night feeders. Dump all standing water in your area. If doing any spraying around yards hit the hedges well, every training talks in length about the difficulty killing mosquitoes in heavy vegetation and especially hedges.

All information obtained through Montana Dept. of Ag, Montana State University, and Van Diest Chemical.