



## Mosquito Season is Always Here

With the rainy season and warmer weather in full swing some might say “mosquito season” has arrived. Residents start asking when they can expect to see the [Palm Beach County \(PBC\) Mosquito Control Division](#) (Division) begin the task of keeping them safe, comfortable and healthy from these bothersome bugs. The bad news is that there is never really an “off season” in South Florida for mosquitoes because conditions can be favorable for mosquito production year-round. The good news is that the Division never stops monitoring for and treating mosquito problems that occur from top to bottom of the largest county east of the Mississippi.

While it may seem like there has been plenty of rain for mosquitoes, typical Florida thunderstorms result in heavy rainfall for only a short time. In order to produce sustained surface water necessary for mosquito production our region needs much more than daily thunderstorms. In fact, mosquitos prefer slow moving, stagnant water to lay their eggs. Female mosquitoes lay up to 100-200 eggs each which can lay dormant even over the winter months and hatch the following summer when conditions are right.

Our worst mosquito outbreaks are nearly always the result of days-long drizzle that is countywide and gradual enough to soak in. Hurricanes do this as well as the occasional spring frontal system. This does not mean we do not get any mosquitoes from our daily drownings however, those produce the kinds of mosquitoes that are more of an annoyance for residents than the rain needed to release the hordes of mosquitoes that require large scale spraying. The recent daily showers are just enough to fill every birdbath, toy, bucket and planter in our yards.

One may ask, but what about all that Zika and the Chica-whata’ we kept hearing about over the last few years? All of these cases investigated are “imported cases” which means the disease is acquired elsewhere and brought back to the United States when that individual returns. Currently, our local mosquitoes are not transmitting any of these diseases and the risk is extremely low of that happening.

That said, it never hurts to be safe and the Division asks residents to not adopt a “false sense of security” that they can simply spray problems away. We rely on the public to take charge of their yards and to scout out anything that might be collecting rain or sprinkler water. Talk to your neighbors and enlist your homeowner’s associations to be vigilant in preventing local mosquito production. When the public helps with local mosquito production the Division can help with the large-scale problems that are beyond the capacity of residents to control.

If you have tried to curb the production of mosquitoes but are still experiencing a major issue, call the Division at (561) 976-6480 so they can respond or investigate. The Division is always pleased to solve these problems with a little education, monitoring and treatment. Sometimes they find that the problem is not mosquitoes at all! More importantly though is the Division’s main mission to prevent any transmission from infected individuals carrying diseases such as Yellow Fever, Dengue, Chikungunya, and our most recent emergent tropical disease, Zika to our local mosquitoes. The Division conducts inspections, and if necessary, larvicide treatments using a newly adapted technology employing [Buffalo Turbines](#).

The Division can have great impact controlling our mosquito populations thanks to an extensive support structure that includes the [American Mosquito Control Association](#), the [Florida Mosquito Control Association](#), their regulatory agency [Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services](#) (FDACS), and the [IFAS/UF Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory](#) (FMEL). This year, FMEL was granted permanent funding by the [State of Florida](#) for several scientists to conduct research into the nuts and bolts of mosquito control. These organizations help mosquito control agencies keep on top of approaching issues, such as new diseases, problems with resistance to insecticides, and new developments in technology.

As always, I invite your comments on any issue of interest to you. As your Commissioner, I am here to help you. You may write me at 301 N. Olive Ave., West Palm Beach, 33401 or at [MBerger@pbcgov.org](mailto:MBerger@pbcgov.org). You can call me or my staff at 276-1310 or toll free at 877-930-2205. Please visit me on the Web at [www.pbcgov.com/d5](http://www.pbcgov.com/d5).

Yours in Public Service,

*Mary Lou Berger*