

What's the buzz on

# mosquitoes?



Learn How You Can

**Fight the Bite!** and

**Be a Skeeter Buster!**

**They swarm. They bite. They suck your blood. And they spread disease.** They're mosquitoes, and with more than 65 species in the state, Louisiana has more types of these insects than most other states in the United States.

## Just the Facts

- Mosquitoes aren't just a nuisance. They can carry and help to spread diseases, such as West Nile virus, St. Louis encephalitis and Eastern equine encephalitis.
- Louisiana's subtropical climate is the preferred habitat for mosquitoes. In fact, Louisiana has nearly every type of mosquito habitat – from salt marsh to floodwater. Worse yet, some mosquito species thrive when temperatures are in the 50s and 60s, making them year-round pests here.
- Of all the mosquitoes in Louisiana, the two principal species found where people live are the southern house mosquito (*Culex quinquefasciatus*) and the Asian tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*). The southern house mosquito breeds in areas such as drainage ditches and septic ponds; the Asian tiger mosquito breeds in backyard containers such as bird baths, flower pot saucers, swimming pool covers, boat covers and even flowers such as bromeliads.
- Despite their name, southern house mosquitoes actually prefer to bite birds, although they will bite humans. On the other hand, Asian tiger mosquitoes feed on a variety of animals and people, carry a range of diseases and are the No. 1 nuisance mosquito in Louisiana.
- Mosquitoes don't feed on blood to live. The insects actually consume nectar from plants as their main energy source. But female mosquitoes need to feed on blood before they can lay eggs, so only female mosquitoes bite.
- Female mosquitoes only live about a week to 10 days and need a three-day cycle from the time of biting a person, horse, dog, bird or other mammal to the time of laying eggs. So a female lays eggs two or three times during her lifetime.
- Because of the way they feed on blood, female mosquitoes spread disease by picking up a disease from one animal when they bite it and then passing it on to another, including a person or horse.
- Besides reaching the "old age" of one week or so and dying, the other major cause of death for mosquitoes is the sun. That's why most feed at night. But there are a few exceptions. Woodland mosquitoes can be active nearly all day, and the Asian tiger mosquito – our major problem – feeds during daylight in the early morning and early evening.
- Although most mosquitoes don't venture far from their birthplace, marshland mosquitoes can travel as far as 10-12 miles looking for water and blood meals in dry weather.



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