

Mosquitoes in Highlands Ranch

Have you been bitten lately?

Did you know only the female mosquito bites? Or that a mosquito's life span is between two to four weeks, and it only travels within a mile radius of its breeding site? If you have been out and about, you have undoubtedly noticed an increase in mosquito populations. Mosquito populations are greatest from late July through September.

Mosquito types

The Metro District's Open Space staff treats its 25 miles of drainages in the natural areas to control the *Culex tarsalis* mosquito, which is out during the hours of dawn and dusk and is a known carrier of the West Nile Virus.

The *Adies vexan*, known as the day biter, is another mosquito of concern. These mosquitoes lay their eggs in irrigated turf grass and on other vegetation. Their eggs lay dormant when relatively dry and hatch when moisture levels and temperatures are right. Rain and supplemental irrigation provide the perfect environment required for these eggs to hatch. Simply walking in your yard will stir these mosquitoes to fly, and you will be bitten.

Aedes aegypti is the primary type of mosquito that carries the Zika virus and is normally found in tropical and subtropical regions. The temperature, precipitation and humidity level in Colorado do not provide a suitable year-around habitat for this species of mosquito. Scientists say other arboreal mosquito species with smaller populations can also transmit the virus, but to date Colorado has not had any mosquito-borne cases of Zika.

Metro District mosquito control practices

Open Space staff treats stagnant water within Metro District owned natural areas using a 150 day non-toxic larvicide. This prevents the mosquito larvae from maturing to adulthood. These larvicide applications target the *Culex tarsalis*, which only lays its eggs in stagnant water. However, there is no way to completely control mosquitoes in public areas and the best way to avoid being bitten is protecting yourself with long sleeves and pants and using a mosquito repellent. Treatments are conducted every 30 days or after a significant rainfall between the months of May and October.

Manage mosquitoes and reduce the chance of bites on your property

- Clean out pet bowls and downspouts, drain containers, mow your lawn and prune vegetation.
- Reduce the amount of water used to irrigate your lawn.
- Cover up - wearing long sleeves and pants is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family against mosquito bites, as is using mosquito repellents.
- Lawn fogger products will help control mosquitoes already living in your lawn. These products are a short-term solution as they only last a few hours before requiring another application.

For more information about mosquitoes, please visit: www.fightthebitecolorado.com. For information about control measures on Metro District property, please call Scott Nelson, open space and park ranger supervisor, at 720-240-5924 or snelson@highlandsranch.org.