NEW METHODS TO CONTROL MOSQUITOES IN FIRE ISLAND PINES

Current and ongoing research, as well as increasing amounts of real-world experience and data are concluding that spraying/fogging is clearly not the most effective and safest vehicle for mosquito control. The Pines Conservation Society has raised awareness through its programing that this eradication practice for mosquitoes has been controversial for years. FIPPOA and PCS have asked Suffolk County Vector Control to stop mosquito spraying immediately. (It was scheduled to start in July.)

First, and perhaps most important, spraying kills only adult mosquitoes (and definitely not larva). But in the process, it also kills a host of beneficial insects including the all-important pollinators, some of which are actually natural mosquito predators.

Spraying is also highly imprecise, and depending on wind velocity and direction, may, at any given time be virtually ineffective at killing even the adults.

We must also take into account that Fire Island Pines is anchored by the Fire Island National Seashore, a great natural breeding ground for mosquitoes, and absolutely no mosquito control of any kind is permitted on those lands. That reality limits our options for control.

For all of these reasons, we are recommending that mosquito spraying stop entirely. Instead, applying ground larvicide should be expanded. It is more effective, a natural insecticide and less toxic than adult mosquito sprays. It work by killing mosquito larvae and pupae before they can grow into biting adults. It is already being done by Suffolk County Vector Control in identified areas with standing water in the Pines.

1. If you have standing water around your property, you can reach Suffolk County Vector Control. They will come to your property and test for mosquito larva (if they haven't already.) If positive, they will add your home to their island wide bi-weekly larvicide application Contact scvector@suffolkcountyny.gov Or, visit Suffolk 311 and follow the "Submit Mosquito Control Request" prompts.

2. There is more we can do. Ground larvicide should be supplemented by individual homeowners who regularly experience standing water on their properties using commercially available, "Mosquito Dunks," (a compressed doughnut shaped larvicide. https://summitchemical.com/products/mosquito-dunks/) This has been accomplished very effectively for years in Cherry Grove. We believe if more areas are identified by Vector Control and residents adopt more use of home remedies, like Dunks, collectively we can mitigate mosquito control in an eco-friendly manner.

3. Lastly and most importantly, residents, your renters and guests should take these helpful hints from Suffolk County Vector Control. It just takes one saucer of a flower pot to produce thousands of mosquitos.

How you can help us reduce mosquitoes around your home:

- Mosquitoes need standing water to reproduce, check your yard at least weekly for standing water in containers and DUMP THE WATER!
- Dispose of old tarps, cans, containers, buckets and similar water-holding containers;
- Discard old tires on your property as tires are a major mosquito breeding source;
- Drill water drainage holes in the bottom of garbage pails;
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly, check and clean clogged gutters on a regular basis;
- Turn over or dump water from plastic kiddie pools, toys and wheelbarrows when not in use;
- Change the water in birdbaths at least weekly;
- Clean vegetation and debris from the edges of backyard ponds, add fish and circulate the water;
- Keep shrubs and grass trimmed so adult mosquitoes will not rest in your yard;
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools and hot tubs;
- Drain water from pool covers often.

While a change like this might appear dramatic and frightening to some, proper education on the scientific and proven advantages of ending the long-standing spraying program and applying larvicide without spraying have proven effective in other Fire Island communities.

We are grateful for PCS's support. They are committed to providing the information and tools for such education and plan implementation and to supporting FIPPOA in its interface with Suffolk County Vector Control to guarantee the success of this proposed new program to enhance summer living in the Pines.