

Here's Every Plant That Repels Mosquitoes

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Mosquitoes can turn a lovely evening into an itchy nightmare. Worse, they can carry dangerous diseases. Unfortunately, chemical sprays and repellents don't always do much to fight them off, and those products leave toxins in your body, and your landscape.

Your garden can help! Choose the right plants to keep mosquitoes away, and enjoy the added benefits of deterring other pests, attracting helpful pollinators, and growing delicious, healthy herbs.

Lavender

Native to the Mediterranean region and southeast regions of India, [lavender](#) is a flowering, fragrant herb from the mint family *Lamiacea*. Lavender is known for its strong and fragrant aroma, widely used in bath and beauty products.

The fragrance of the plant will discourage nearby bug activity, and lavender oil makes an excellent topical repellent—rub some on your skin to stop mosquito attacks. It won't just keep you scratch free, though. Lavender also nourishes the skin, smells great, and acts as a relaxant, encouraging sound sleep.

With any of the direct skin applications mentioned here, start with the classic perfume/cologne spots—ankles, wrists, and neck. If you're getting bitten in other places, expand your target surface area. For more sensitive skin, mix the lavender oil with aqueous cream before applying.

If you're in the mood for a more advanced project, you can mix lavender oil with citronella and eucalyptus oils (or oils from any of the plants below) and use the mixture as a natural bug spray. You could also use these ingredients to [make candles](#) that will help keep insects away when burning.

Water lavender only when its soil is completely dry. By watering deeply and less frequently, you can encourage it to flourish, especially with lots of sun.



Lemon Thyme

One study found that a repellent made from [lemon thyme](#) was more than 60 times more effective than DEET at keeping mosquitoes away. Crush a handful of leaves and rub them on your skin for the protective effects. Not only is it more powerful, it smells far better than chemical products.

Catnip

Your feline friends will be happy about this addition to your garden. Like lemon thyme, [catnip](#) has been found in studies to surpass commercial repellents.

Petunias

Especially useful as companions to a vegetable garden, these cheery and colorful flowers will discourage mosquitoes and crop-nibbling insects like asparagus beetles and squash bugs.

Peppermint

[Peppermint](#) has a strong scent that repels most insects. It's also very hardy and fast growing, so if you don't want it expanding too rapidly, keep it in small pots around your garden. Mint has also been known to attract bees and butterflies to the area, so you might want to keep it away from doors and windows.

Mint makes an excellent addition to many kinds of foods and drinks. It tastes great diced up on watermelon, and a few fresh leaves make a bright addition to any pot of tea.



Sage

As a living herb bush, [sage](#) may have limited effects on mosquitoes, but when it's dried and burned, it produces a thick, clean-smelling smoke that drives mosquitoes away. Some people believe sage has spiritual properties, too, and its value in the kitchen is undisputed—its dry, delicate flavor pairs beautifully with chicken and squashes, for example.

Marigolds

Many people plant [marigolds](#) for their bright color and tendency to survive challenging weather, these plants also keep mosquitoes away with their unique smell. Put these plants in pots and place them near the edges of

your patio and doors to prevent mosquitoes from getting close to your home. (Marigolds may also be planted in vegetable gardens to keep other insects from eating the food you produce.)

Mix them in among your other plants, or make a perimeter around your property.

Marigolds have a unique smell that many insects, including mosquitoes, find offensive. They thrive in direct sunlight and work well when planted in gardens with a lot of natural light.



Floss Flower

These decorative additions come in multiple colors, and also help keep [rabbits and deer](#) from nibbling your garden. Their repelling powers come from coumarin, a chemical used in commercial bug-sprays.

Geraniums

The powerful scents of these hardy flowers and their fuzzy leaves deter mosquitoes. Lemon scented varieties seem to be especially effective. [Geraniums](#) will flourish in warm, dry climates, but they can survive in colder places if they're planted in pots and cared for well.

Bee Balm

This triple-whammy plant can attract pollinators to your yard while discouraging mosquitoes and growing tasty, edible leaves. Toss it in a salad, boil it into a [jelly](#), or dry it into a tea, then enjoy your yummy treats while watching hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees visit the small pink blossoms.

Citronella / Lemon Grass



Widely used in bug repellent sprays, candles, and oils, citronella keeps the mosquitoes away in its natural grassy form just as well if not better than those products. It's happiest in bright sun and warm climates and will die off in a frost, so keep it potted and bring it inside in the winter if you live somewhere cold.

Happy citronella grass can grow up to six feet tall, and might require some grooming to maintain an appealing shape. Often confused with the [mosquito plant](#), to which it is not related, citronella is considerably more effective as a mosquito stopper.

Basil

[Basil](#) smells fantastic to most humans, but somehow not to bugs. An excellent herb to have on hand for cooking, basil grows well in plenty of sun, but likes to stay moist. Like mint, it will spread quickly if it's not contained.



Garlic

The health benefits of [garlic](#) are so great that you should be growing some anyway. Leave some to flower for the mosquito fighting effect.

Lemon Balm

Fresh [lemon balm](#) leaves repel mosquitoes, both from the plant and when rubbed on skin. To save its powers for when the plant isn't in season (or to keep on hand for camping trips), you can make a topical solution from this herb by drying it out for five days, crushing it in a mortar, and mixing it with water or essential oils like citrus, jojoba, and grape seed.

Let it sit for about two weeks to develop, giving it a shake each day in the morning and evening to make sure the active ingredients are well distributed. When it's ready, strain the solution into a small container or spray bottle. Kept in a cool spot like a refrigerator or a dark cabinet, this mixture should remain effective for about a year.

If you're not much of a gardener, lemon balm is a great choice for a natural repellent. Like mint and basil, it's a robust, aggressive plant and will rapidly expand.

Rosemary



Another potent herb used in a wide variety of recipes, [rosemary](#) loves hot and dry weather and does not require a lot of water. It also does well when potted, as it can be shaped as it grows, and the pots can be

moved around your yard to follow the sun throughout the year. It can be fantastic in a garden, too. Some people even grow it as a hedge-row, forming a natural barrier for their property.

Rosemary is also an excellent kitchen plant to have around, since it pairs so well with almost every savory food, especially potatoes and lamb.

Other Steps You Can Take

If your yard still has mosquito problems after incorporating these plants, focus your additional efforts on keeping your grass mowed short, eliminating any standing water on your property, and replacing your light bulbs with sodium models. As a last resort, change your evening wardrobe to lighter colors—mosquitoes appear to prefer landing on dark surfaces.