



## Missouri Chapter

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### **Best Ways to Keep Mosquitoes Away**

Call Vector Control to be Put on a No-Fog List

Mosquito time is here and contrary to what you may find from an internet search, the best way to keep mosquitoes from biting is to use a personal insect repellent, advises Jean Ponzi, Green Resources Manager with the EarthWays Center of Missouri Botanical Gardens. "Mosquitoes are attracted by the CO2 we exhale, by body heat and scents. Repellents work by jamming the mosquito's sensory signals. Everyone's body chemistry is different so you have to try a few repellents to see what works best." Ponzi also recommends using electric fans around outdoor seating since mosquitoes are weak flyers and eliminating all sources of the standing or stagnant water mosquitoes need to reproduce.

In an attempt to keep mosquitoes away, most municipalities rely on fogging or barrier applications. However, both fogging and barrier applications are indiscriminate and lethal to beneficial insects and pollinators, while doing little to rid your yard of mosquitoes. Fogging is spraying airborne pesticides from a moving truck, which only kills flying insects. Barrier applications work by coating plants and grass with chemicals that remain toxic to insects that come in contact with it for up to 30 days. Barrier applications are what pest control companies use and although some claim to come from natural sources are still lethal to insects, caterpillars and pollinators. Neither approach has any effect on mosquito larvae and therefore within a short time the adult population rebounds.

Several cities have stopped fogging and have successfully gotten rid of adult mosquitoes by targeting larvae. They eliminate standing water where possible and treat it when it can't be eliminated. Brentwood stopped fogging in 2019 after determining the ineffectiveness did not justify the cost and potential negative impacts. Collinsville, Illinois ceased fogging in 2020. Ellisville recently stopped fogging and city councilmember Dan Duffy stated, "The primary reason Ellisville stopped fogging is that, at best, it has a very short-term effect on adult mosquitos. In our view it is better to eliminate or control larvae."

If you are a resident of St. Louis County but don't live in one of these cities, you can request to have your house put on a no-fog list by calling St. Louis County at 314-615-0680. Fogging in the City St. Louis is only done in response to complaints to the Citizens Service Bureau. Residents of other counties can get details on mosquito control protocols from your municipal Public Works office or County Health Department.

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