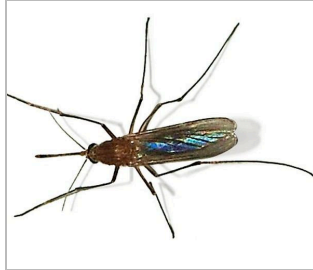


## Mosquitoes

(Asian Tiger Mosquito – *Aedes albopictus*; Northern House Mosquito – *Culex pipiens*)



*Asian tiger mosquito*



*Northern house mosquito*



*Larvae (“wigglers”) in standing water*

**Identification** – The two we deal with most in Northern Virginia are the **Asian tiger mosquito**, which is small and black with bright white stripes on the legs and a white stripe down the back and bites aggressively in the daytime, and the plain brown **northern house mosquito**, which bites mostly at dawn, dusk and night. Only females bite, because they need blood to lay eggs. The larvae are the little “wigglers” you see hanging at the surface of standing water.

**Why they’re a problem** – Beyond itchy bites that ruin an evening on the deck, mosquitoes in Virginia can carry diseases like West Nile virus. They go from egg to biting adult in about 7 to 10 days, and they can breed in as little as a tablespoon of water.

**What we find** – Mosquito activity depends almost entirely on the weather and the environment. If it rains this week, you’ll have mosquitoes next week, no matter what or how much anyone sprays. The usual sources are right in the yard: flower pots and saucers, bird baths, toys, tarps, clogged gutters and downspout drains, buckets, drainage ditches and low spots that hold water, ornamental ponds, and piles of composting debris. Asian tiger mosquitoes don’t fly far, so most of the ones biting you were raised close by. A yard that backs up to woods or a wet area will always have some.

**What works – Get rid of the water first.** Killing larvae where they breed does more than spraying adults. For water you can’t dump, like a drainage ditch or pond, a bacterial larvicide (Bti dunks) kills the larvae without harming fish, birds or bees. For a planned party or cookout, a treatment of the shrubs and foliage 2 to 3 days before knocks down the adults. Honestly, the monthly spray programs many mosquito companies sell usually don’t work well, and the spray drifts onto non-target areas and hurts bees and other pollinators.

**What you can do** – Start with tip and toss: once a week, dump anything holding water and scrub out bird baths and pet bowls. Keep gutters and downspouts flowing, fix low spots that puddle, and cover or flip buckets, boats and wheelbarrows. In rain barrels, ponds or ditches you can’t drain, use Bti larvicide dunks and follow the label. Use an EPA-registered repellent, keep window screens repaired, and try a fan on the deck, since mosquitoes are weak fliers. And read reviews before buying traps or candles, because some help on a patio and some are pure gimmicks.

**When to call Dynamic** – Give us a call if you have standing water you can’t fix, like a drainage area or pond, or if you have an outdoor event coming up. If you’re not sure what’s biting, send us a photo and we’ll identify it for you.