

MOSQUITOES



DESCRIPTION

Adults are approximately 1/8 to 3/8" long, with the body and legs normally covered with scales. They are mostly gray to black in colour; some marked with white, silver, green, or iridescent blue scales. The head is long with 15-segmented antennae that are feathery on the male and hairy on the female. They have two wings that are long and narrow with scales along the veins and wing margin.

Larvae have a wider head and thorax than the abdomen, the thorax consisting of 3 fused segments and being the widest. Antennas have only one segment. Their mouthparts with labial brush usually consist of numerous fine hairs.

HABITS

Mosquitoes have adapted to almost every kind of aquatic situation such as permanent ponds and marshes, temporary flood waters or woodland pools, drainage ditches, and water contained in tree holes, leaves of plants, or artificial containers. Exceptions are flowing streams and the open waters of large streams, rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans. The number of generations per year ranges from 1 in cold climates to many in warmer climates where they breed continuously. The larvae feed on small aquatic organisms and organic debris, the pupae do not feed, and the adult males feed on nectar. Adult females also feed on nectar but most females require a blood meal before they can lay fertile eggs.

Flight ranges vary with the species but the average range is around 8-16 kilometres, with record ranges between 30 kilometres coastal and 180 kilometres at sea. The time of day in which biting occurs varies but most bite from dusk to dawn.

CONTROL

Control begins with an accurate and thorough assessment of the problem. On the household level, relief can be achieved by preventing entry to structures through proper screening and sealing and applying residuals to resting surfaces. Larvicides can be used in areas of standing water such as ditches, birdbaths, ponds and marshes. These will kill the larvae before they hatch. Fogging or spraying will also provide you with a mosquito free zone for a period of time. Treat under shrubs, short cut grass and tall grass.