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Mosquito Management begins battle against bugs

Sarasota County Mosquito Management Services is beginning its annual campaign to control one of nature's most annoying insects.

Emerging swarms of saltwater and freshwater mosquitoes will get truck and aerial spraying in many areas of Sarasota County this week. Additional mosquitoes are likely to emerge in the next several days. Mosquitoes from water-filled containers and blocked gutters also are causing problems. While no cases of mosquito-carried diseases have been reported in Sarasota County this year, health officials urge residents and visitors to take extra precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

Ground spraying will begin about 8 p.m. tonight in the Englewood area. Recent rains and rising temperatures have stimulated the hatching of salt marsh and floodwater mosquitoes. Spraying is effective against flying mosquitoes and is considered safe for people and pets by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It has no lasting presence in the environment.

Aerial spraying will begin in the rural areas east of I-75, Thursday, April 8 if trap counts justify spraying. Spraying takes place at night when mosquitoes are most active. Aerial treatments provide quick relief from mosquito bites and can reduce the threat of mosquito-transmitted diseases such as West Nile viral encephalitis and St. Louis encephalitis. Spraying is done by truck in urban areas using permethrin, a synthetic form of an insecticide derived from the chrysanthemum flower.

To reduce the risk of mosquito bites:

- Avoid being outdoors at dusk and dawn.
- Dress in clothing that covers the skin.
- Use mosquito repellent that contains DEET.
- Check outside your home to eliminate standing water, including containers.

For more information or to report a mosquito problem, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 or visit the Sarasota County Web site, www.scgov.net and click on "M" under County A-Z.