

Using Mosquito Dunks to Control Mosquito Larvae

Mosquito dunks offer a safer, more environmentally friendly way to control mosquitoes compared to traditional sprays. Pyrethroid-based foggers, often used to kill adult mosquitoes, also kill bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. According to University of Delaware entomologist Doug Tallamy, and founder of **Homegrown National Park™** targeting adult mosquitoes with foggers is ineffective and costly, only killing a small percentage of adult mosquitoes. It's far better to stop them in the larval stage.

What Are Mosquito Dunks?

Mosquito dunks contain *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti), a naturally occurring bacteria that kills mosquito larvae but does not harm humans, pets, birds, fish, or beneficial insects.

How to Use Them (Tallamy's Method):

1. Fill a bucket with water.
2. Add straw or hay and let it sit in the sun for a few days to ferment. This attracts female mosquitoes to lay eggs.
3. After eggs are laid, drop in a mosquito dunk. The larvae hatch and ingest the Bti, which kills them.

Why Use Dunks?

- Target mosquitoes before they mature.
- Avoid toxic chemicals.
- Protect pollinators and other beneficial species.

Key Points to Remember:

- Dunks must be placed in water to work.
- Each dunk covers about 100 sq ft of water surface and lasts for about 30 days.
- Dunks can be broken into smaller pieces to treat multiple areas (e.g., birdbaths, gutters, ponds).
- Dry periods count toward the 30-day lifespan once the dunk is first wet.

Additional Resources & Demonstration:

Check out videos on our YouTube channel:

- tinyurl.com/mosquitovideos
- homegrownnationalpark.org

For detailed usage instructions, always refer to the label on your mosquito dunk packaging.

If you have additional questions about using mosquito dunks or other horticulture questions, please contact the Newport News Extension Master Gardener Volunteers or your local Master Gardener Unit:

EMAIL US: helpdesknnmga@gmail.com

FIND US ONLINE: nnmastergardeners.org