

Chautauqua Watershed Notes  
For the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy  
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The Slapping Season

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For the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy



*The number of annoying, biting mosquitos around your property can be reduced if you take care to eliminate even small amounts of standing water where many kinds of mosquitos breed.*

The year in this area is measured by different things. I look forward to the first spring flowers, the first leaves budding out on the trees and the first coloring of trees in the fall. Summer, however, is the slapping season. The mosquitoes have arrived in full force this year, and they intend to stay.

The unusually wet summer we have had is creating breeding habitat for mosquitoes like we haven't had in a while. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water, like puddles and holes in trees that collect water. The frequent rainfall has created much more standing water this year, and the slapping of arms and legs has begun.

It seems like anytime I stand still outside, my hand unconsciously strays to a mosquito that has landed on me. Fortunately, there is something I can do about it.

Mosquitoes don't tend to lay their eggs in lakes and ponds. The fish that live there would eat them right up. If you have a mosquito problem, the lake is not the issue. Chances are that the mosquitoes are breeding somewhere in your yard or your neighbors yard. (Mosquitoes don't respect property boundaries, so your neighbors may be helping to contribute to the problem.)

Since mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water, the best thing to do is make sure there is no place for them to lay eggs. It's amazing where they find places to breed. My cat's water dish has been full of wriggly mosquito larva in the summer. I have a friend whose gutters go to a rain barrel that she uses to water plants. It was filled with mosquito larvae after the first rainfall, so she put goldfish into the barrel in the summer to eat the mosquito larvae.

Mosquitoes find the most interesting places filled with water. Old buckets in the yard are the perfect breeding ground. They should be turned upside down when not in use. Garbage can lids or plastic chairs can also have puddles of water on them that last long enough for mosquitoes to grow. Toy trucks, beach toys, cups, soda cans, old tires, and anything else that can hold water may also be a mosquito breeding ground.

If there is a mosquito problem in your area, don't look at the lake. Look at your yard and eliminate any possible standing water. If you see trouble spots in your neighborhood where mosquitoes may breed, politely bring it up with your neighbors in conversation. The slapping season will never go away completely, but we can all pitch in to make it less of a problem. Walk around your yard today and see where there are little bits of standing water. Look deep into your bird baths and pet water bowls. If you see some tiny wriggly things in there, you have been raising mosquitoes in your yard. Replace pet and bird bath water often and don't give the skeeters a chance to grow up. They won't go away, but perhaps enough will disappear to make it more bearable outside.

The CWC is a member-supported, local grassroots 501(c)(3) tax exempt watershed education, pollution prevention and land trust organization. It seeks your support and participation to conserve Chautauqua Lake's most important endangered shore lands and implement yards and grounds practices which reduce and minimize nutrient and sediment inputs to our waterways, which fuel nuisance plant and algae growth. Membership donations can be made by calling 664-2166.