

Bromeliads and Mosquitoes

Mosquito larvae grow in water-holding bromeliads. As adults, these tiny day-biters can be a biting nuisance for you and your neighbors.

Mosquitoes Grow in Water

Mosquito larvae develop in water before emerging as flying, biting adult mosquitoes. The type of habitat and water determines which mosquito species will find it a suitable nursery. The larvae of *Wyeomyia*, *Aedes*, and *Culex* mosquitoes are all found in the water-holding vase of bromeliads, where the leaves meet at the base of the plant. *Wyeomyia* larvae are specialized to develop in bromeliads.

Bromeliads

Bromeliads are in the pineapple and air plant family. They come in many varieties and colors, but share one common trait – they hold water at the axial of each leaf. **A single bromeliad can house 100 mosquito larvae!!**

Day-Biters

The mosquito species that develop in bromeliads are day biters and will not be affected by nighttime fogging.

See for Yourself

You can see if your bromeliads contain larvae by siphoning water from the plants with a turkey baster. Squirt the water into a bowl or cup. The larvae look like pale wiggling little worms.

What You Can Do

- Eliminate bromeliads in your yard.
- Use flying insect sprays labeled for adult mosquitoes. Once a month, spray a light mist over the plant and allow it to settle. Always read and follow label instructions when applying pesticides.
- Apply granular *B.t.i.* (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*) or methoprene, which can be sprinkled into the bromeliads. These products are safe for plants and animals and are effective for three weeks.
- Flush the bromeliads with a garden hose to wash out larvae and eggs and to wash away the nutrients the mosquito larvae feed on. Researcher J.H. Frank recommends treating the bromeliads with artificial fertilizers to compensate for the natural organic materials removed. These fertilizers do not provide food for mosquito larvae.



For mosquito problems, call Pinellas County Mosquito Control at 727-464-7503.