

Message from Diane Romano, President CGCAI

August 21, 2017

Good morning Cherry Grove,

This past Saturday morning we had a meeting to discuss the mosquito situation in Cherry Grove and our options for dealing with them.

We were pleased to have Legislator Bill Lindsay from Suffolk County; Peter Burke, supervisor of Vector Control in Suffolk County and his team; and Tom Malanga, a frequent Cherry Grove visitor and a member of the Department of Public Works in Suffolk County.

I tried to take detailed notes ...here are the key points:

When we talk about "Spraying" we are really talking about "Fogging" which is spraying a mist (fog) into the air using a canister. This kills adult mosquitoes in flight. This is administered by walking around the community with spraying machines. Spraying (fogging) is not administered from an airplane.

Vector Control stated that this process usually keeps mosquitoes away for about 24 hours. So, communities that are fogged have some protection for one out of seven days because they are permitted to fog only once a week. And because Fire Island National Seashore (FINS) does not allow ANY treatment in their areas, if the wind blows from the Carrington track or any other FINS area, the mosquitoes will come back with the wind anyway.

Vector Control is ruled by the NO SPRAY law. Any homeowner can register his/her house as a No Spray House with Vector Control. Once that happens, Vector Control cannot, by law, Fog within 150 feet of that house. We have somewhere between 12 and 15 houses on the list. Because of the closeness of our homes, the overlap of No Spray areas makes it impossible to Spray Cherry Grove. Quite frankly, they do not think Spraying would be very effective in Cherry Grove anyway because we sit between 2 large FINS properties...and remember, it only lasts for a day anyway. It was also noted that the fogger they use will NOT hurt other insects or pets. There is more active ingredient in a collar you put on your dog or in Lice shampoo used on children than in the amount of Fogger they use in a large area.

What do they do for us in Cherry Grove? Vector Control is in Cherry Grove every week administering larvicide under houses and on the ground and dumping any standing water they see such as in planter trays or garbage can covers.

THE SINGLE BIGGEST ACTION HOMEOWNER CAN DO TO HELP TO CONTROL THE MOSQUITO POPULATION is to dump standing water around their property which kills the eggs in the breeding ground. We all know we should empty garbage cans and covers, dishes under plants. Even the smallest amount of water breeds thousands of mosquitoes: tarps, pool covers, bottles and cups, indentations in wood, inverted wine or soda bottles -- ANYPLACE water can sit -- mosquitoes will breed! Even in a hole in a tree trunk!

As you are walking around, look for standing water and dump it! This can help dramatically as many of us are not here during the week.

Use DUNKS in water (under and around your home) caused by the high-water table. Goody's has them -- use one every 10'X10' area. Dunks can also be distributed in higher ground even without standing water since it will activate during rain.

Many of us use Garlic spray, Cutter's Spray and Thermacell units. We do need to take care of our own property to the best of our ability. Any of these consumer products are OK for us to use. Read the labels to see if you are buying a pesticide which will kill insects or a repellent which keeps them away. They did say that commercial fogging machines are illegal for homeowners to use.

Tom Malanga recommended that we look at building trash cans enclosures with a slanted top (some people do have them) which would eliminate the standing water which collects in cans and covers. Even drilling holes is not enough. I will talk to a few contractors to see if we can get a "group deal."

Todd Erickson is putting together a committee to look at other measures to try to reduce the mosquito population. We will have him report on his progress at our September 17 meeting and again next Spring. Hopefully we will make some progress

Best regards, Diane