

Gardening Tips

Mosquito Repellents

By John Ferguson

This past weekend I was working in the garden and my old foe Mr. Mosquito showed up for the first time this spring. So what is a gardener to do? Mosquitoes hunt by scent and anything that interferes with their sense of smell drives them away.

One of my favorite mosquito repellents is garlic oil. I have used it for years with great success. All one has to do is mix a few ounces in one gallon of water and place in a pump sprayer. I spray the doorways and areas around my patio where I grill. It will have a strong scent of garlic for about 30 minutes, which fades away, and we cannot smell it. However, the scent will last for a couple weeks or more depending on the weather at a level that repels mosquitoes. I do not use it in the garden, as it will repel beneficial insects also. A good brand sold at most garden centers that sell organic supplies called "Mosquito Barrier" which is stronger than regular garlic oil.

Another method that works well is the called the Patio Egg. It is a porous ceramic container shaped like an egg, which is held in netting that one, can hang up on their patio cover or tree limb. The egg is filled with a couple ounces of herbal oils. The scent from the oils diffuses through the walls and drives the mosquitoes away. Each egg will repel mosquitoes from a 10 feet wide area around the egg. One filling of the egg will last for weeks.

In the garden, many plants have strong scents that repel mosquitoes. The first group is members of the alliums family we know as garlic and onions. Many of our common herbs from mints to rosemary are known to repel these pests.



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One of our common annuals is Marigolds, which also add color to our gardens works well. Some species of lavender, lemon balm, lemon grass, catnip, and even basil repel mosquitoes. Cedar trees are another plant that mosquitoes do not like and cedar oil repels many insects both good and bad.

Citronella grass where we get citronella oil has been used for years as a mosquito repellent. In addition, many of the mints repel these pests and they are useful in drinks and cooking.

Hence, by having these plants in our garden we can reduce the number of mosquitoes without having to use toxic pesticides.