

The Mosquito Magnet Revolution

Over 30 percent of Americans die needlessly each year as the result of mosquito-induced blood loss. It is sad because these deaths are at least 50 percent preventable. Some are taking this threat seriously and have stopped eating bananas and are rubbing themselves with Bounce dryer sheets for protection. That's right—bananas are not the health food our mothers brainwashed us into believing. They will, once ingested, make mosquitoes want to eat us and kill us. I read it on the internet, so it must be true. Vick's Vapo Rub will also stave off the beasts, but on the downside, does not encourage your love life. Your nasal region though, will become extremely acute.

There are some things you can do to naturally reduce your exposure to mosquitoes. Willem Takken and his colleagues at Wageningen Agricultural University in the Netherlands found one species of mosquito that is attracted to stinky feet and Limburger cheese, so elimination of either of these in your life is recommended. Dark clothing also initially attracts mosquitoes from a distance and sweating is a certain lure because of the chemicals it contains. Floral or fruity fragrances should be avoided as well which means that (sadly), AVON is doomed. Swamp camping is discouraged.

Deet, the old standby for repelling mosquitoes, is still the preferred and most effective means for keeping them away. It should not be applied to skin though as I've witnessed it all but eat through clothing. Put enough of it directly on your skin and I suppose you could just up and disappear. Citronella candles are pleasant, but will only be helpful if sitting very close to them, and then may set you on fire.

The commercial community has taken notice of this situation ever since the government has insisted that they will not drop chemical weapons on mosquito-prone sections of the country despite the outcry of many local citizens who have lost loved ones to these tiny, yet deadly predators. There are now machines called "Mosquito Magnets" that you can buy to put in your yard that will simulate a living, breathing human. This will all but certainly trigger the battle cry of the little suckers thereby attracting billions of them directly to your door. This, you pay money for. Of course these machines don't look human though. That would be spooky. (Although if they did make some that look human it might be a good marketing angle for crime-addled suburban areas.) No, these rural units look much like a portable grill with either electric or propane hook up and emit CO₂, heat, and moisture thereby enticing said mosquitoes with these remarkable human characteristics. The machine then traps the unsuspecting mosquito when she comes for a look-see. (Only female mosquitoes bite.) The human reward comes in emptying a suicide bag full of dead mosquitoes and the satisfaction of knowing that you may have saved your family from a trip to the hardware to buy guns to kill themselves.