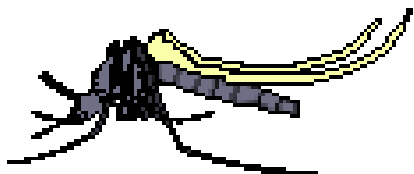




Environmental Focus

Bug bites



Did you know....

- About 150 species of mosquitoes live in the U.S. and over 3,000 are found worldwide.
- Female mosquitoes feed on other animals including birds, frogs, turtles and snakes. The males live on nectar and plant juices.
- Mosquitoes fly into the wind to get better lift and to lead them to their victims.
- Mosquitoes are attracted to the carbon dioxide we exhale.
- Fleas can survive months without food.
- Fleas can leap 150 times their own length either vertically or horizontally, equivalent to a person jumping 1,000 feet.
- Of the 2,000 species of fleas worldwide, only 120 transmit plague and only 20 bite humans. (BPO)

Cicada killers are common now



The largest wasp commonly found in Nebraska is the ground nesting cicada killer. This 1 1/2 to 2-inch wasp is common during midsummer to late summer when annual cicadas are present and singing in the trees. The cicada killer wasp is black with yellow markings on the thorax and abdomen. The wings and legs are a rusty orange color.

They are solitary wasps and live independently rather than in colonies; they do not depend on other members of a colony to share in raising their young or maintaining their nest. The females capture annual cicadas

and place them in cells located at the end of tunnels they have dug in the ground. One or two paralyzed cicadas are placed in each cell and a single egg is deposited before the cell is closed by the female, who flies away, never to return. The wasp larvae feed on the cicada and develop into wasps that emerge the following summer.

The cicada killer, like other solitary wasps, has the capability to sting, but will not unless handled or threatened. Only female wasps have the ability to sting. Stings inflicted by solitary wasps are usually not severe but reaction varies with each individual.

Wasps are generally beneficial and a nest in an out-of-the-way location, where it is not likely to be disturbed, should be left alone. If, however, a nest is located where problems could arise (such as under a deck or near an often used door) removal is justified. Ground nests of cicada killers and other digger wasps can be destroyed by placing an insecticide dust in and around the nest entrance during the night. The dust particles will adhere to the wasps as they come and go from the nest. Cover the nest opening with a shovelful of soil after all activity has stopped. (MJM)

Bug zappers—good, bad, electrifying?

The pops and crackles from a backyard electronic bug zapper may be music to your ears, but chances are the device is not killing the insects you want to eliminate. In fact, it may be attracting even more of them to your yard than you would have if you did not have the zapper.

Electronic bug killers use black light to lure insects to their death on an electrified grid. In an enclosed space (such as a screened porch, dairy parlor milk room or hospital corridor) they can be fairly effective. Fastened

to a post in the backyard, they will kill insects—the crackling noises of insects frying on the grid attest to that—but they are not effective in ridding the area of the biting pests that people expect them to eliminate.

Mosquitoes and other biting flies in search of a blood meal find their victims by detecting the carbon dioxide they give off. Though mosquitoes will be drawn to a black light, they will quickly be distracted by a warm body. Horse flies and other biting flies work days and are

not attracted to a black light at all.

Even if all the insects you wanted to kill were attracted to the device, you could never clear and keep an area insect free unless you could enclose it. New insects are always coming into your yard from outside it—especially if you have a black light out there to attract them. It is clear that more mosquitoes are drawn into a yard with a bug zapper than would fly into it on their own. (DJ)

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Let's manufacture monster bubbles!

To enjoy a great activity on these hot August days, why not blow bubbles! When you blow bubbles, you use soap to stretch water's tough skin and make it super elastic. The best place to experiment with monster bubbles is outside on a humid day. That way, you will be able to enjoy seeing rainbows in soap film and not have to worry about making a big mess. When a large bubble hits a dry surface, it will explode. So, be careful that soap does not get into your eyes.

Best Bubble Brew

Mix up a batch of this brew for some terrific bubbles. You will need:
1/2 cup thick dishwashing detergent (such as Joy)
1 quart water
String



Straws

1. Pour the detergent and water into a pan and mix together.
2. To make a bubble frame, thread some string through two straws and knot.
3. Dip the square frame into the bubble brew. Pull the frame out slowly so the soap film does

not break.

Try these tricks with your frame:

* Lift the frame up to your face and blow the soap film gently to make a large long bubble.

* Hold the frame vertically and slowly pull it through the air. Can you make an even longer bubble?

* Dip the frame into the pan and lift it out holding the straws together. Gently pull the straws apart, lift up the frame and then

bring the straws together.

* Bend a piece of wire into unusual shapes to make weird bubbles.

* Tape toilet paper rolls or cardboard rolls together and blow through them to make monster bubbles.

Have fun! (ALH)

EnviroShorts

Earth is the blue planet, yet only 1 percent of all water on Earth can be used for cooking, drinking and a million other uses. While our demand for water continues to grow, our supplies do not. You can help. Do not waste or pollute water. Start by turning off the tap when you brush your teeth. Use a broom (not a hose) to clean sidewalks and driveways, and buy rechargeable batteries.

What goes down a drain, on

the ground and into the trash has the potential to pollute water. Take used motor oil and old car batteries to an automotive recycling center. Use a fly swatter instead of bug spray.

Repair leaky faucets, and replace water-guzzling fixtures



and appliances with water-efficient counterparts. A leaky faucet can waste up to 2,000 gallons of water a year. While an old-fashioned toilet uses between 3.5 and 7 gallons per flush, the newer, water-efficient models use as little as 1.5 gallons.

Put a shut-off nozzle on your garden hose. Water your lawn before 10 a.m. and NEVER when it is windy. Landscape with grasses, shrubs and plants that require little water. Typically, 50 to 70 percent of household water is used on lawns and gardens. (DJ)