

# Rain Barrels, Mosquitoes & You

So you're thinking of getting a rain barrel? Congratulations, the NSMAD fully supports efforts to conserve water and protect the environment. Your conservation efforts come with responsibilities though. Proper installation and maintenance are crucial to ensure that while you have water for you to use around your property, MOSQUITOES don't have access to it too.

Improperly installed and maintained rain barrels can breed a tremendous number of mosquitoes. Please take the following steps to ensure that your rain barrel is not a mosquito farm.

- It's always best to use a container made specifically designed as a rain barrel rather than buckets, garbage cans or other home-made containers. Rain barrels are designed to keep bugs and debris out of the water, helping to prevent mosquito invasions.
- It is extremely important to always use a mosquito-proof screen to cover the rain barrel and the overflow openings. Most commercial rain barrels come with a screen cover. Standard window screen can be fitted over the overflow tubes or over other water-saving containers to prevent mosquito access.
- Be sure to always remove the water that pools at the top of the barrel at least once or twice a week.
- If possible, place your barrel on a surface that will soak up any water that overflows so it doesn't pool and create a mosquito habitat.
- Regularly inspect your rain barrel system. Check for cracks or leaks. Be sure that all fittings and seals are intact and that no water accumulates on the ground around the barrel.



- Use a larvicide product that kills mosquito larvae. A variety of products are available at garden centers, hardware stores and home centers that will kill the larvae but not harm humans, pets, plants and wildlife.



**North Shore  
Mosquito Abatement  
District**