



How To Make Your Own 50-cent Pesticide-Free Mosquito Trap!!

Hold the pesticide sprays!

Did you know that most of those sprays being done by mosquito companies not only can harm you, kids, and pets, but that they actually kill all the beneficial insects in your yard? We're not just talking about the obvious pollinators like bees, butterflies, and dragonflies, but there are dozens to hundreds of species of insects and spiders that are smaller and spend a good part of their life hunting and eating bad insects that attack and damage flowers, vegetables, shrubs, and trees! Reports have gone up in recent years from people seeing insect damage on their ornamental and vegetable plants, loss of honey bee hives, and declining birds, much due to the overuse of pesticides.

The number one way to control mosquitoes in our yard is to eliminate standing water, starting with the gutters and also emptying pots, toys, or other items in the yard that hold water. Next best, though, is to make a population sink for mosquitoes, to get them to lay their eggs but the adults will never escape!

Get your crafting gear out, and make a simple Ovitrap for less than a dollar! How do we know these work? Because they are used by the military around the world successfully! And there's no need for any nasty chemicals. Hang a few around the yard for maximum effectiveness--all you have to do is make sure they always have water (shady areas help them from drying out fast).

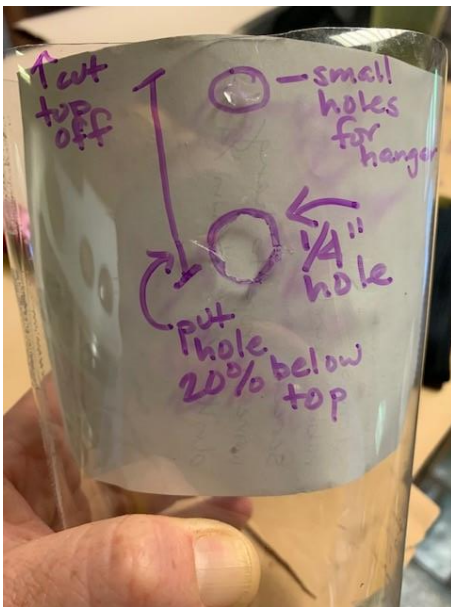
These Ovitrap act as a "population sink" for mosquitoes--the short-lived adults lay their eggs on them, the larvae crawl through to the water below, and when adults hatch they cannot escape and die in the trap, ending the population cycle of mosquitoes! Since one adult can lay 50 to 500 eggs, in just a few weeks you could come close to eliminating the local population--now there's something fun to tell your neighbors about. Maybe craft some extras as gifts for the nearby houses?

Here's what you'll need in the picture!--almost everything can be gotten at a dollar store, I drank a big bottle of water for my container (you can also use one of those plastic cups from a sporting event), and I got my window screen by asking on my local listserve if anyone had some spare bits.

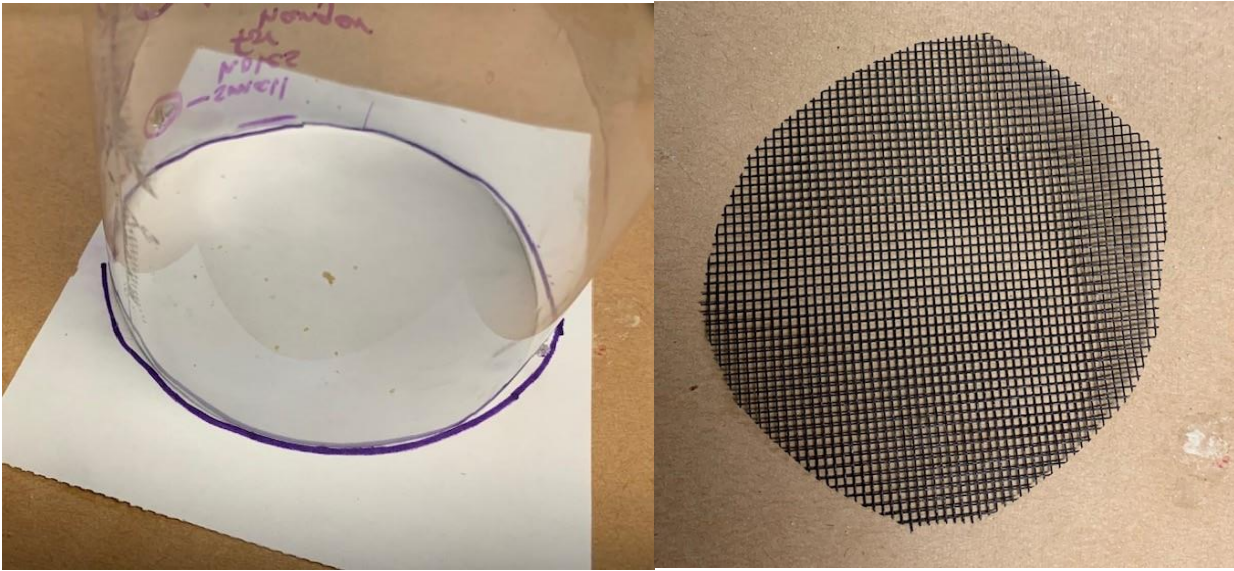


First, cut your bottle, or if you have a big plastic cup, you can use that. Make sure the cup is deeper than a "Solo" cup, you need space for the water and air.

Next, cut a 1/4" drain hole about 20% below the top of the container, this is to allow water to overflow if it rains, because you'll need airspace between the screen and the water. Punch two small holes opposite each other for your wire or string hanger.



Next, trace the opening of the container on a piece of paper, cut that circle, and use it to cut a piece of window screen:



Take your black sock, put some rocks in it, put it in the container, then stretch the top of the sock up and over the outside. My sock fit tightly because it was long, but you might need a rubber band to hold it to the outside. Your container will now look like this, but with the rocks holding down the very bottom of the sock:



Pour in your water! Ideally use stagnant water from a pond or container that has been out for a while, or put a little dry dog food or bread crumbs in tap water so it will create smells that attract mosquitoes.

Insert your screen, making sure it's above the drain hole, but below the rim, because the mosquitoes will need to lay their eggs on the wet rim above the screen. Once the eggs hatch, the larvae will crawl through the screen to the water below.



Wire works best for a handle, because you can poke it through your hanger holes as well as the sock, but you can force a hole through the sock and just use string as a hanger. Ask a neighbor for bits of wire, or use the wire from a paper take out rice container!

Here is my finished Ovitrap! The water will wick through the sock to keep the top moist, which is where the mosquitoes will lay their eggs.



Put these around your yard--they are best hung in the shade or the water will evaporate too fast from the sock. Be sure to add more water every few days, especially when it is warm, so the sock stays wet!



Remember, these are population sinks--meaning the eggs will turn into larvae, but once the mosquitoes turn into adults they are below the screen and cannot get out so they die quickly. These will take a few weeks before you see results--once a mosquito lays an egg, it is 7 days before they morph to larvae to adults. You'll be able to see if the water below the screen gets too full of dead adults, and can just dump it out and refill as necessary.

Comment with pictures and success stories of your own Ovitrap, and spread the word by sharing this blog!

