

» THIS STORY: [READ +](#) | [Comments](#)

## Mosquitoes Be Gone!

Fed Up With Swatting and Scratching, Homeowners Turn to Mosquito Busters

By [Jura Koncius](#)

Washington Post Staff Writer  
Thursday, August 13, 2009

Holly and Steve Hartell moved to a 1940s Alexandria farmhouse so their two daughters and dog Grady could have a big corner lot to play in. But daughter Nellie, 5, kept getting attacked by Asian tiger mosquitoes, out for blood even during daylight hours.

### THIS STORY

**Mosquitoes Be Gone!**  
[Prevention Tips](#)

"She had welts the size of quarters," says Holly Hartell. "She told me she didn't want to go out there."

August is peak mosquito season in the Washington area. Lighting a citronella candle and praying, or tucking a dryer sheet inside a bra (an urban-legend mosquito repellent) aren't enough for a growing number of local households. Many families are tired of having to spritz their legs with DEET every time they go out to get the newspaper. Some, like the Hartells, are bringing out the big guns.

Every 21 days from April through October, two men carrying backpack blowers and dressed in "Ghostbusters"-like get-ups of white Tyvek coveralls, goggles, respirators and gloves pull up to the Hartells' house in Del Ray. They are bug busters from Mosquito Squad, one of a handful of area spraying services that have opened in the past few years. For an annual fee of \$699, the Hartells' property is treated with encapsulated pyrethroid, a longer-lasting, synthetic form of pyrethrum, the botanical-based insecticide derived from chrysanthemums. They spray in the dark and shady places where mosquitoes hide, including under bushes and decks and along the foundation and fences.

### PHOTOS

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)



Damien Sanchez, owner of a local Mosquito Squad franchise, treats a yard in Alexandria where 5-year-old Nellie Hartell, next photo, can now play without getting welts from mosquito bites. The Hartells have the yard sprayed every three weeks from April through October. (Photos By Mark Finkstaedt for The Washington Post)

### TOOLBOX

[Resize](#) [Print](#) [E-mail](#)  
[Yahoo! Buzz](#)  
[Constant Contact](#) TRY EMAIL MARKETING FREE FOR 60 DAYS!

### COMMENT

**0** Comments

#### BE THE FIRST TO COMMENT

You must be logged in to leave a comment.  
[Log in](#) | [Register](#)

[Why Do I Have to Log In Again?](#)

Post

[Discussion Policy](#)

WHO'S BLOGGING powered by [sphere](#)

[» Links to this article](#)

Del Ray and other neighborhoods are abuzz over trucks sporting such names as InsectMist and Seasonal Changes. Sick of ruined cookouts and play dates, some homeowners have decided to kill mosquitoes rather than repel them. "This area has a long history of mosquito problems," says Greg Baumann, vice president and senior scientist for the National Pest Management Association. "People would leave Washington in the summer because of mosquitoes."

Residential spraying has been around for years in buggy Southwestern states, where builders at some high-end developments are installing misting nozzles as part of new construction. Some consumers are alarmed by the possibility of mosquito-borne diseases such as West Nile virus and malaria; others just want to reclaim their yards.

Advertisement

Locally, business is on the rise. The two [Mosquito Squad](#) franchises that opened here two years ago have more than 550 customers. Karl Hubig, a Brookland builder, started [InsectMist](#) three years ago and has more than 100 clients. Hubig does lots of one-time sprays at weddings and vacation homes; he even sprayed the lawns of the British Embassy.

"Almost all of our clients are referrals," says Hubig.

Thomas Eckert, owner of [Seasonal Changes Lawns and Landscapes](#) in Crofton, went into the business because of the agony mosquitoes inflicted on his dog.

Most companies offer a menu of services. Among them is a contract to spray at set intervals (usually two to four weeks) during warm weather; an automatic misting system installed in the yard with brief timed-release sprays (\$2,500 and up to install, plus a maintenance charge); and one-time sprays for special events (from \$200).

"My wife screams when she sees a bug," says Nick Barbarine, who built a home in Potomac on a wooded lot near a creek and outfitted his property with an InsectMist system. The couple have a baby and a Labrador retriever puppy and like to entertain outside. Barbarine says the system is working great. "Everyone I've had over is amazed," he says.

Some may think spraying yards for mosquitoes is over-the-top, but even in lean times homeowners are willing to invest in a bite-free zone. With all the money they've sunk into outdoor living rooms with comfortable furniture, trophy grills and lighting, they don't want to spend time swatting, lighting citronella lanterns and slapping their ankles.

CONTINUED 1 2 [Next](#) >

Digg

submit



Post

More ways to share this Article...

[Reddit](#)

[Twitter](#)

[myspace](#)

[del.icio.us](#)

[NewsTrust](#)

[Stumble It!](#)

» THIS STORY: [READ +](#) | [Comments](#)

## Find Your Dream Job Now!

FIND JOBS

Jobs by [SimplyHired](#)

### FEATURED ADVERTISER LINKS

[Attorney: Asbestos Lung Cancer, Failed Cochlear Implants](#)

[Lawyer: Mesothelioma, Fentanyl, Hydroxycut, Pain Pumps](#)

[Save Up To 75% On Cruises at Vacations To Go](#)

[Debt destroying your day? New Debt Wise helps you decrease your debt!](#)

## Understand more about...

[Homeowners Turn to Mosquito Busters](#)



## From Our Partners



[Will the Right Wing Please Decide Whether It Loves or Hates Medicare?](#)

[Slate Reporter Tries To Attend All 100 Events at Netroots Conference](#)

[Miyazaki's New Movie: Goldfish Girl](#)

[Drinks Human Blood](#)

[I Kind of Hope the Lions Maul Animal Planet's New Lion Guy](#)

[Obits Say Shriver Helped "the Mentally Retarded." Is It OK To Say That?](#)

[Does God Want Me To Pay Off My Credit-Card Debt or Tithe to My Church?](#)

[The New York Hot Dog Vendor Who Pays \\$53,558 a Month in Rent](#)

[Busty German Runs for Parliament on Cleavage Platform](#)

## People who read this also read...

[Obituaries](#)

[Charles Krauthammer - A Better Plan for Health-Care Reform](#)

['A Recovery Only a Statistician Can Love'](#)

[The Post Asks Economists Whether the Worst of the Recession is Over](#)



© 2009 The Washington Post Company

[NEWS](#) | [POLITICS](#) | [OPINIONS](#) | [BUSINESS](#) | [LOCAL](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [ARTS & LIVING](#) | [GOING OUT GUIDE](#) | [JOBS](#) | [CARS](#) | [REAL ESTATE](#) | [RENTALS](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#)

SEARCH:



[washingtonpost.com](#)



Web: Results by



[Search Archives](#)

[washingtonpost.com](#): [About Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Search Terms](#) | [Topics Index](#) | [Make Us Your Home Page](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS](#) | [Widgets](#)

[The Washington Post](#): [Subscribe](#) | [Home Delivery Service](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [PostPoints](#) | [e-Replica](#) | [Online Photo Store](#) | [The Washington Post Store](#) | [About The Post](#) | [National Weekly](#)

[The Washington Post Company](#): [Information and Other Post Co. Websites](#)

© Copyright 1996-2009 The Washington Post Company | [User Agreement and Privacy Policy](#) | [Rights and Permissions](#)

[Help](#) | [Contact Us](#)