

Preventing Mosquito Breeding in Your Bromeliads

The disease-spreading *Aedes aegypti* mosquito takes about seven days to go from egg to adult—sometimes less, if the weather is particularly warm. That's why it's important to maintain your bromeliads on a weekly basis.

Here are a few things you can do to keep your plants from breeding these mosquitoes:

- **Flush the water—and the mosquito larvae and eggs—out of your bromeliads.** A good strong hosing will flush the water with larvae out of your bromeliads. But be sure to do this at least once a week to disrupt the mosquitoes' life cycle.

- **Coat the water in the bromeliads with a small amount of food-grade oil.** Either quickly spray the surface of any water in the plant with non-stick cooking spray, or place a few drops of cooking oil in the water. The oil will cover the surface of the water and keep any mosquito larvae present from breathing.

- **Treat the water in your bromeliads with a safe larvicide.** *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*, or Bti, and methoprene are commercially available larvicides which are safe for use with plants, people and pets, when used as directed. You can find either one in pellet or granule form at hardware stores, as well as online. They should be applied about every two weeks or so for maximum effectiveness.

