Biting midges

You can take a big step towards living with midges by making sure you are protected.

Biting midges, often referred to as midges, prefer humid overcast conditions with minimal air movement. Anything you can do to reduce humidity and increase air movement will make your house and garden less attractive to midges.

Closely mown lawns, sparse vegetation around your house and minimal surface water in the garden will decrease humidity and increase air movement, minimising resting places for midges. Also avoid gardening or watering in the afternoon and early morning.

Biting midges can penetrate ordinary flyscreens. During peak infestations, midges have been known to enter houses looking for blood meals. Increase air movement in the house by using electric fans. Fans can effectively create an area unsuitable for biting midges as their activity reduces in wind speeds of over 6 to 8 kilometres an hour.

Spraying residual (surface) insecticide on your flyscreens will help deter midges from entering your home. Burning mosquito coils inside can also reduce numbers. Most insect repellents are effective against midges and should be used whenever you are outside the house.

For those who find repellents irritating, an equal part mixture of baby oil, Dettol and eucalyptus oil is useful. Long sleeve shirts and long trousers made of closely woven materials provide good protection.

Mosquito coils and most insect repellants are effective against midges.

What are we doing?

City of Gold Coast (the City) officers conduct regular monitoring and surveillance programs of the larval biting midge population throughout the tidal canal systems and waterways on the Gold Coast.

When biting midge populations are in a susceptible stage, City officers conduct control programs using a boat fitted with a boom spray to treat the intertidal zone of the canal beach.

Additionally, the City conducts adult biting midge control by misting with approved products, including the natural insecticide Pyrethrum, in areas of the city to reduce the biting midge numbers to an acceptable level.
Useful tips

Personal reaction to bites varies from slight redness which disappears in half an hour or less, to severe inflammation. If you react rapidly and the swellings are small, you are reasonably immune so treatment may not be needed and the swelling and itch will soon go away.

For these less severe cases, the following tips may help reduce the effects of bites:

- A hot bath may provide temporary relief.
- Antihistamine creams or lotions from the chemist are quite effective, but do not apply them when the skin is broken.
- Some insect repellents also give relief to the bite, providing the individual’s skin is not sensitive to the repellent.
- If you react hours or days later to a bite, whether you felt the bite or not, your immunity is poor and you are likely to be more severely affected. If your reaction is very severe, consult your doctor.

For more information contact

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