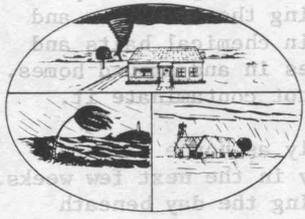


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## HURRICANE EFFECTS ON INSECT POPULATIONS

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The devastation brought by hurricanes is a boon to some of our insect enemies. The inevitable filth and debris left by destructive winds, high tides and flooding rivers create excellent conditions for buildup of mosquitos and house flies. Flooding forces scorpions to seek refuge in and around buildings. House flies and mosquitos can multiply rapidly and are capable of spreading certain diseases such as typhoid, dysentery, encephalitis and malaria. In rare instances, painful scorpion stings may seriously affect the victim. These pests are difficult to control with chemicals alone. Sanitation and elimination of breeding areas are the first steps in effective control.

Many kinds of mosquitos exist in the coastal area of Texas and can be severe nuisances as well as carriers of diseases. The most troublesome kinds are those that breed in temporary rain pools, flooded areas, salt marshes, ponds and water trapped in tin cans and other containers. Receding water from tides and rivers is trapped in ditches, ruts, under buildings and other places where the "wigglers" or larvae can develop. During the cleanup operation, efforts should be made to eliminate areas of standing water and to empty tin cans, vessels and other containers in which water has collected. Certain counties on the coast have organized mosquito control commissions which are concerned with county-wide control. Because of the enormity of the task, these commissions cannot be expected to rid the area of all mosquitos. The Texas State Department of Health, through local health units, may give technical assistance in controlling disease-spreading species. However, the major responsibility of controlling mosquitos in a localized area will fall upon individual residents.

Mosquitos inside the home can be controlled with commercially prepared sprays or aerosol bombs. Stagnant water where fish or livestock do not create a problem may be treated with one of several insecticides as well as kerosene, fuel oil or diesel oil. Stock tanks can be treated safely with kerosene, but fish ponds should be treated with nonleaded gasoline. Use caution to prevent creating a fire hazard with the petroleum products.

Accumulation of debris, decaying organic matter and the disruption of sanitary facilities in some areas create favorable

breeding areas for house flies. Rapid and thorough cleanup of these areas is the first step in controlling these disease and filth carrying insects. The use of certain chemical baits and sprays will help reduce the number of flies in and around homes. All food should be stored where flies cannot contaminate it.

Scorpions do not reproduce as rapidly as house flies or mosquitos, but they will appear frequently in the next few weeks. Scorpions are active at night, hiding during the day beneath loose stones, loose bark of fallen trees, boards, piles of lumber and within walls of buildings. The elimination of breeding and hiding areas will help to protect the area in and around the home. If severe pain or slight systemic disorder should occur as a result of the sting, bathe the affected area with a weak ammonia solution. Obtain medical aid if this does not give relief.

Texas Agricultural Extension Service publication L-311, Texas Guide for Controlling Household Insects, contains additional information concerning the control of mosquitos, house flies, scorpions and other pests. Also, L-625, The Mosquito, contains useful information on the habits and control of mosquitos. These leaflets are available from county Extension agents or from the Department of Agricultural Communications, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843.

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