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## Do Mosquitoes Prefer Blondes?

After I enjoyed a “juice to the elbow” peach, I then enjoyed the fireworks display, and then the mosquitoes enjoyed biting me. The mosquitoes are bad this year, and going to be even more numerous because of the flood waters. Traps monitored by the County Emergency directors are keeping an eye on them. Here’s some information I gathered online:

“1 in 10 people are highly attractive to mosquitoes,” Jerry Butler, Ph.D., professor emeritus at the University of Florida. Another estimate from the research suggests more than 20 percent or one in five people -- are mosquito magnets.

It is definitely true that some people are more attractive to the pesky insects than others, but the reason *why* remains a bit of a mystery. There are a lot of myths out there, including the assertion that mosquitoes prefer *blondes*. In reality, mosquito preference doesn't seem to have anything to do with hair color, blood sugar levels, floral perfumes or many of the other factors we've heard rumors about.

"Different species have different cues for being attracted," says Janet McAllister, Ph.D., an entomologist in the Division of Vector-Born Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While scientists don't know *exactly* what attracts female mosquitoes to some and not others -- it's worth noting that male mosquitoes don't feed on human blood -- there are some observed patterns. Here are a few signs you might be a prime target for the blood suckers! Bigger people produce more carbon dioxide and if there's one thing that will lure a mosquito from a great distance, it's a big cloud of CO<sub>2</sub>. This is why adults tend to get bitten more than children and why men are more likely to be a feeding site than their female companions. Mosquitoes find lactic acid alluring and if you've just worked out, chances are you've got some building up in your muscles. What's more, the exertion could cause heavier and quicker breathing, another way to build up some carbon dioxide around you.

Mosquitoes enjoy a bit of cholesterol in their meals. People who metabolize cholesterol quickly - - *not* those who have higher cholesterol blood levels -- may attract mosquitoes because byproducts of that metabolism are present on the skin.

Acetone and estradiol released in your breath and many of the compounds and bacteria found on your skin contribute to your attractiveness. Scientists believe that some people may give off stronger scents than others, even though everyone produces these compounds. A report on NBC: It could be that individuals who get less bites produce chemicals on their skin that make them more repellant and cover up smells that mosquitoes find attractive.

What we *do* know is that there isn't much you can do about it -- besides using an EPA-approved mosquito repellent and covering up.

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## Japanese Beetles

They have returned. Japanese beetles. Feeding on over 300 species of plants, they are one of the most widespread, and potentially devastating, insect pests homeowners deal with.

Japanese beetles are characterized by their metallic green color and coppery wing covers. They are distinguished from the Green June beetle by their smaller size (Japanese beetles are just over a half inch long - Green June Beetles may be close to an inch...) and the presence of a series of white tufts of hair that project from under their wings.

Japanese beetles typically feed in groups – large groups – often looking for any green material. Leaves are often a favorite ‘landing spot’, and they will feed on the upper surface of the leaf, leaving a lacelike or cellophane looking appearance. Flowers are often targeted, as are wounded or mushy fruit. They prefer feeding at the tops of plants, but will drop quickly to lower in the canopy if disturbed. Plants in full sun are most often targeted.

Severe damage to landscape and fruit plants can result from the large feeding groups and the length of time they are present. Individual beetles will live for 30 to 45 days. Due to emergence differences, feeding activity can occur for up to six weeks or so.

Japanese beetles seem to overwhelm most landscape plants in fairly short order, so control efforts are most effective when implemented quickly. If you find only small pockets, try killing adult beetles by shaking them from the host plant in to a jar or bucket of soapy water. Do so in the morning for best results when beetles are more sluggish.

Insecticides labeled for Japanese beetle control are numerous. Look on product labels for Japanese beetle as well as the host on which you are trying to control them. Some active ingredients include cyfluthrin, bifenthrin, cyhalothrin, and carbaryl. The pyrethroid products will usually provide protection for two to three weeks. Sevin (carbaryl) will be slightly shorter. If you want to try a product less harmful to natural control insects – of Japanese beetles or other garden pests – consider Neem products or Pyola. They can provide some level of deterrence for a few days.

Traps are an option for Japanese beetle control. Smaller traps may attract more beetles than they kill. Larger traps have been tested by the University of Missouri, showing promise on a commercial scale. For information on that research, including information on how to make your own, go to [https://ipm.missouri.edu/MEG/2018/1/mass\\_trapping\\_japanese\\_beetles/](https://ipm.missouri.edu/MEG/2018/1/mass_trapping_japanese_beetles/).

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Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

## Food Thoughts for This Time of Year

### Electric Pressure Cookers Still Not Safe for Canning

The message continues. Do not use electric pressure cookers for canning. Research conducted at Utah State University shows that electric cookers do not always reach or sustain safe temperature levels for safe canning. This is even more critical at higher altitudes.

Electric pressure cookers also have faster heat up and cool down time periods. This can affect heat transfer and pathogen destruction.

### The Story Behind the Fruit Cobbler

As summer marches on, fresh fruit becomes more abundant and inviting. One popular dish to prepare with fresh fruit is a cobbler. So where did this dish originate?

There are a couple stories about the cobbler. The fruit layer is usually topped with biscuits. Some say this was “cobbled together”. Then baked, the biscuits puff up and the finished product looks like cobblestones on a street.

Another story from New England says it was called a “bird’s nest pudding” or “crow’s-nest pudding.” It is served with custard, but no topping in Connecticut, with maple sugar in Massachusetts, and a sour cream sauce in Vermont.

However you make your summer fruit cobbler, enjoy!

### Making Jam and Jelly with Frozen Fruit

The following tips will help create successful jams and jellies from frozen fruit or juice:

- \*The best frozen fruits for jams or jellies are blueberries, red and black currants, gooseberries and rhubarb.
- \*Before freezing fruit, measure the fruit and label the container. Many fruits collapse as they thaw and may create an inaccurate measure.
- \*Jams and Jellies from frozen fruit and juice are better if no sugar is added before freezing.
- \*When freezing fruit for jelly or jams, use  $\frac{1}{4}$  under-ripe and  $\frac{3}{4}$  ripe fruit.
- \*Thaw frozen fruit in the refrigerator until only a few ice crystals remain. Follow directions for the type of jam you are making and follow the recommended proportions of fruit (measured before freezing), pectin and sugar.

When making jelly from frozen juice, thaw frozen juice in the refrigerator overnight. Measure juice and use it immediately in recommended proportions with sugar and pectin.

### Freezing Foods for the Fair

To help save time and stress at county fairs, prepare food entries early and freeze them. Most baked goods freeze well and can still be of good quality. This includes cookies, yeast and quick breads, and cakes. Here are some tips:

- \*Bake the product as usual. Cool completely! This helps prevent condensation inside the wrapping and development of ice crystals.
- \*Use moisture-vapor resistant packaging. This includes freezer-safe plastic containers or bags, heavy-duty aluminum foil, and rigid containers.
- \*Separate layers of cookies with wax paper or parchment paper.
- \*If a cake or bread is to be frosted, freeze the product only and frost after it is thawed.
- \*Make pie crusts ahead of time and freeze. Freezing whole prepared pies can cause the filling to soak into the crust.
- \*Thaw all baked goods in the freezer packaging. The can be thawed at room temperature. Remove from the freezer the night before the fair. Once thawed, repackage into the proper packaging according to your fair rules.

Nancy C. Nelson  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Family Life

### Did You Forget to Clean This?

The American Cleaning Institute's latest National Cleaning Survey revealed some interesting facts about our cleaning habits or lack of them! They learned that about one-third of us don't believe we are cleaning everything in our homes often enough. So, they have provided a few fast and easy tips for cleaning up around the house – in focusing on those places we likely don't have time to clean regularly or don't remember to do often enough.

Door knobs – These are perhaps the things we touch most often, every day. So, grab a wipe or sponge at least once a week and get rid of germs that can be transferred from person to person.

Bed linens – According to the survey, 23 percent of people couldn't remember the last time they washed their sheets. So, when you get home today, throw your sheets in the wash!

The abandoned guest toilet – Those who have guest bathrooms may not use them very often, but that doesn't mean they don't need a quick cleaning.

The germ-factory refrigerator – It's not the most fun job, but getting rid of spoiled or expired food and wiping down the shelves is, perhaps, one of the healthiest ways you can keep you and your family healthy.