

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

Date: April 16, 2021
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS RESIDENTS FREE MINNOWS

Minnows, dunks and education are part of the County's mosquito prevention strategy

(White Plains, NY) – After a one-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Westchester County Department of Health will once again give away free minnows for residential ponds and water features, along with mosquito dunks, advice and strategies to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile Virus.

A total of 250 pounds of minnows will be available at the Westchester County Airport, 2 Loop Road, West Harrison, 10604, as follows:

- Friday, April 23, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Saturday, April 24, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Residents with ornamental ponds can add fathead minnows to the water. The minnows eat mosquito larvae, preventing them from maturing into biters. Dunks serve the same purpose in birdbaths, rain barrels and unused pools.

Residents who plan to pick up minnows should wear masks, maintain social distancing when they arrive, and bring a bucket or pail. The Health Department will distribute the minnows in watertight plastic bags. To keep the minnows viable, residents should bring them straight home and release them immediately into ponds with at least eight inches of water.

Sherlita Amler, MD, Commissioner of Health, said: “With their hearty appetites, this baitfish can keep mosquitos from breeding in your pond and biting you in your own backyard.”

Any resident can help reduce the mosquito population, even without minnows, just by removing standing water around their yard, covering trash containers kept outside and draining birdbaths twice a week.

Amler added: “Mosquitoes can lay their eggs in a puddle, a flowerpot saucer or an old tire, so after it rains, pour out standing water and clear your yard and the pavement around your home of buckets, wheelbarrows and toys that hold standing water.”

Any large areas of standing water on public property that cannot easily be removed should be reported to the Health Department at (914) 813-5000.

For more information, download the “Westchester County Cares Bug Off” brochure on the West Nile Virus page at <https://health.westchestergov.com/west-nile-virus>

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