



O C T O B E R 2 0 2 1

Pensacola Park Post

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REPELLENT FOR THOUGHT by Jesse Voigt

Mosquitoes, as we all know, are a constant summer problem. Every summer, they come to join the party, and every summer we see lawns peppered with signs from mosquito eradication companies. Last month one of those companies approached our home with their services, and after being bitten a million and one times, we decided to hear them out. Our main questions went: Is it toxic? "No," they said, "it is sustainable, made from chrysanthemum flowers." How does this not affect the honeybees? We asked. "It doesn't, it only targets the 'bad' bugs." How does this work if your neighbors have not done anything? "The spray helps travel to other areas, so if you get it done, it helps your neighbors too." And then they showed us a list of the "bad" bugs it targets as well, which included things like ticks and spiders, wait, what...spiders? A bad bug?

On our property, we have a hobby growing plants, Hoyas to be exact, and we deal with the occasional "bad bug" from time to time, and with two cats and a small child running around we were hesitant about using chemicals indoors, so we turned to beneficial bugs. Which means, we use bugs to take care of other bugs, and we have found it to be the best eradication system we have ever come across. So when this company told us that their "sustainable" eradication for mosquitoes also got rid of spiders (which are, firstly, not bugs but arachnids, and secondly, beneficial pest controllers) we were given serious pause. And we began to ask, what is really going on with these companies, and what is really accurate behind the sales pitch? So naturally we jumped down the rabbit hole with Google searches and were immediately inundated with articles warning us against the use of such companies, "Every year, more yards are being sprayed for mosquitoes. Did you know you could be poisoning your yard but mosquito populations are not being reduced? Before deciding to spray your yard, know the facts. Spraying can harm you, your kids, pets and your neighbors. The chemicals can also harm birds and insects that help eat mosquitoes and pollinate your yard." This was the opening sentence from an article on mygreenmontgomery.org when they did an interview with an entomologist/conservation scientist and a certified organic land professional/organic landscape manager. So now thoroughly freaked out by the interwebs, we decided to try and get some clarity from local certified specialists, and reached out to Dr. Jonathan L. Larson, assistant professor of Extension entomology at UK, and Mrs. Jennie Condra, Nursery Inspector from the Office of State Entomologist at UK. This is what they had to say when we asked them how effective, sustainable, targeting, and potentially damaging, are these mosquito repellent companies?

Mrs. Jennie Condra, "Pesticides made from Chrysanthemums are called Pyrethrins, and are lethal to a large range of insects, not just mosquitoes."

Dr. Jonathan Larson, "This is a touchy subject unfortunately...As Jennie mentioned previously, pyrethrum (crushed whole flowers) or pyrethrins (harvested and separated from flowers) are known to have effects on a wide range of insects. They are organic products, but they are natural insecticides that the chrysanthemums evolved in order to protect themselves from herbivory. They can be sold as liquids or powders and used for pest control. Pyrethrin has a low toxicity to birds and to humans (though there are possible effects of exposure; see this link: <http://npic.orst.edu/factsheets/pyrethrins.html>). They are lethal to fish in addition to their effects on pollinators, like honeybees. There is a repellent effect on bees, which some say helps to limit their exposure. It is important to point out that there are lots of things that are "hazardous" to non-targets but they don't become a "risk" until there is exposure. In that vein, I would have questions about the service being offered to you. First, how are they offering to apply the product? One mosquito abatement technique uses ULV or ultra low volume application to attempt to limit the exposure non-target organisms might receive. If they aren't offering the ULV service, there could be potentially more non-target effects from their application. Second, when do they make their applications? Insecticides applied during the day are more likely to be encountered by non targets such as bees, where as early morning, late evening, or night applications are less likely to be encountered (hazardous products but no exposure as I mentioned before). Third, are they advertising to treat the entire landscape, shrubs, trees, and grass or just focus on grass? Different sites offer different routes of exposure and would therefore require different measures to limit exposure. For example, if they are treating turf only then simply mowing before treatment to remove any clover or dandelion flower heads can lower exposure for pollinators. That can be harder to do if they are treating all plants in the area. Final thing I will say. These treatment programs can help with mosquito issues. It is a temporary help though, that is why they must return multiple times in a summer. In extension, we often advocate that these kinds of treatment strategies be used before a large outdoor event such as a wedding to prevent bites but that they shouldn't be relied on for long-term control. Instead we try to teach people about removing sources of water if they can [standing water on junk piles, bird baths, clogged gutters], treating standing water with mosquito dunks [found on Amazon] that contain a strain of Bt that kills immature flies, like mosquito larvae, and wearing personal repellents while outdoors. As far as I know, some of the modern ULV applicators and products have not been tested for their effects on non-target organisms though. That means that I am speaking from the fact that we know what pyrethrins can do, but I can't say definitively that what you are being sold poses a huge risk to the environment. For what it's worth, the products do kill mosquitoes. They persist for 1-2 weeks depending on what is in the spray (this can vary with precipitation and sun exposure) and mosquitoes will die when they land on the residues. Pyrethrins and their synthetic form, the pyrethroids, are typically contact products; the insect has to encounter them and absorb them, and they don't necessarily have to be directly applied. It is true what they say about, you can kill your mosquitoes but adjacent areas will still have them and they will repopulate your yard as soon as the residues are gone. That is why we want to control for larval habitats by discouraging standing water and treating with Bt dunks."

There is an age old saying, "perhaps the cure is worse than the disease," and for us, we could not help but ponder this when it came to spraying for mosquitoes and how this affected the entirety of the ecosystem in our yard. For now our household will focus on recommendations listed above, and others: increasing our use of citronella candles, installing bat boxes, screening our water collectors, and planting mint, holly basil, marigold, citronella, and other plants that help repel mosquitoes. We are still probably going to curse the heavens after a mosquito bite, but I would like to believe the yard approves.

The Mighty Wolf Run Watershed by Rebecca C. Glasscock

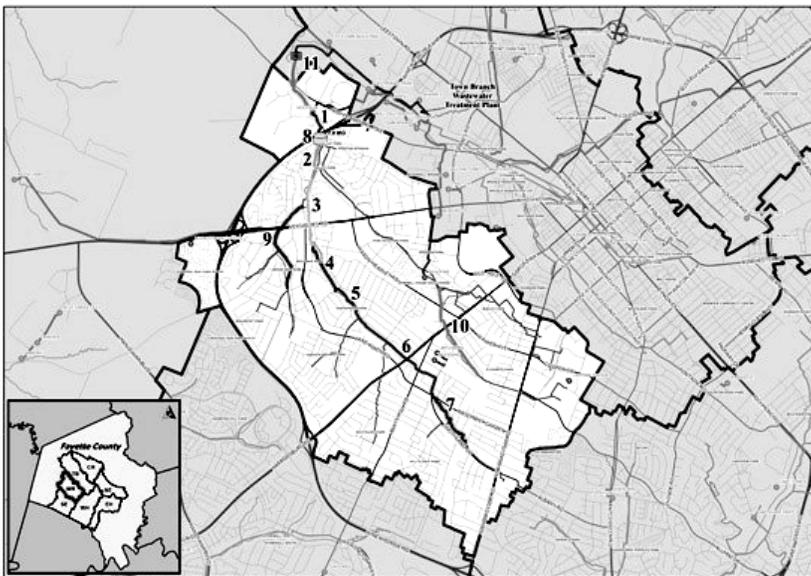
One of the nice features of our neighborhood is the green space connecting Pensacola and Goodrich. Bordering the little park is Wolf Run. It doesn't look like much, but looks can be deceiving.

Wolf Run begins just south of our neighborhood, near the Regency Kroger. The volume of Wolf Run is such that, in the late 1800s, consulting engineers from the Louisville Water Company suggested that Lexington's water be drawn from either Wolf Run, North Elkhorn, or the Kentucky River, with the latter being the least attractive option.

We don't experience Wolf Run as a raging river because we are near the headwaters, it has been diverted into culverts and in places it runs underground. For example, Wolf Run dives down a swallow hole on Lone Oak Drive and travels through channels in the bedrock for 3.5 miles before surfacing at McConnell Springs.

Especially problematic is Wolf Run's tendency to flood. Serious efforts to stem the flooding date to the mid 1950s, when the 14 acre Lexington Fairways Driving Range was opened (followed in 1985 by Kroger). To solve the problem, rather extraordinary measures were necessary. As long-time residents of Pensacola Park recall, our park used to be occupied by seven houses. You may also remember water climbing up the houses' steps. The LFUCG government felt the only option was to purchase the houses and demolish them. By 1996, five of the houses had been torn down. Since then, two more have been demolished.

And as it turns out, those Louisville engineers were sort of right. Wolf Run discharges into Town Branch which connects with Elkhorn Creek. Elkhorn Creek discharges into the Kentucky River – the source of Lexington's drinking water.



Watershed map of Wolf Run

THE PENSACOLA PARK GARDEN

Create an herb garden in beds, borders, or containers. Try tough, long-lasting herbs like oregano, thyme, sage, shallots, and parsley. Some annual herbs worth adding include basil, dill, and rosemary.



Hint: Mint can be invasive, so keep it in containers.

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Please visit our website www.pensacolapark.org to order any emblems, or write us at pensacolapark@gmail.com. Payment is via paypal, check, or cash. There are three types of emblems you can order:

- Flag. Comes in three colors: 2'x3' Black, Green, Red (\$85)
- Metal Plaque. Comes in two sizes: 8x8 (\$165) and 5x5 (\$80)
- Stickers. Comes in eight different colors (\$2 each)



PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO PENSACOLA PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

As an organization we do not currently collect any neighborhood association dues, instead we function off of grants, fundraisers, and donations from the neighborhood. Donations allow us to go after matching grants, buy trees to increase our canopy, improve street conditions, throw community events, and be able to print this newsletter. If you would like to donate, you can either: (1) Drop off Cash or Check to our GREEN PPNA mailbox at 107 Lackawanna Rd / (2) Use Paypal @ pensacolapark@gmail.com

ABOUT PENSACOLA PARK PRESERVATION SOCIETY AND PENSACOLA PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Pensacola Park Preservation Society is a non-profit 501(c)3 formed by Pensacola Park Neighborhood Association in order to bring together residents and businesses located in the Pensacola Park Nationally Registered Historic Boundary, for the common good of (1) preserving the historic integrity and resources of the area; (2) creating an environment that promotes sustainable and appropriate growth for the neighborhood; (3) providing historic education and assistance to those in the Pensacola Park Neighborhood for the preservation and rehabilitation of historic homes, structures, and landscapes; and (4) Unifying and being representative of all the original streets in the Pensacola Park Historic boundary. Also check us out online at www.pensacolapark.org, and follow us on Facebook @ Pensacola Park Neighborhood Association.

If you have any questions or would like to submit topics or op-eds to Pensacola Park Post, please feel free to write us at pensacolapark@gmail.com. If you would like to stop receiving the free monthly post, please write us and put "stop post" in the heading, along with your physical address. Thank you.

Pensacola Park Neighborhood Association (PPNA) and Pensacola Park Preservation Society (PPPS), our nonprofit, are not affiliated with WGPL Neighborhood Association. PPNA/PPPS represent ALL streets in Pensacola Park Historic District, including: Goodrich, Lackawanna, Nicholasville, Norfolk, Penmoken, Pensacola, Rosemont, Suburban, and Wabash.