

What is the risk of mosquito bites if we have small bog gardens, birdbaths or small ponds using sinks or equivalent?

- First thing to say is that a number of our members already have bog gardens and small ponds, created from a shallow dish, dustbin lid, bucket or old sink and are supporting a range of wildlife such as insects, amphibians, mammals and birds.
- The committee understands that some people may be worried about attracting biting midges and mosquitos. However, it is worth pointing out that not all midges bite and of the species that do, only the adult females seek out a blood meal. Adult males feed solely on plant juices. Larvae in the water are filter feeders, eating minute particles of food, algae, leaf detritus and animal remains and, alongside other pond life, help to keep ponds clear. The article and You Tube video demonstrates this and gives more information (see link at end).
- Midges or mosquitos are not too much of a problem in tiny bog ponds or small areas of still water. They tend to cause annoyance where they occur in large numbers for example on wet heath/moorland, salt marshes, temporary woodland pools and flooded areas, tree-hole water and large lakes. It is worth noting that they are attracted to water butts if not tightly covered and the water is left to stand for a long time. They are quite weak fliers, so are not likely to stray far from 'home'.
- If the dustbin lid ponds are mainly used as birdbaths, it is advisable to change the water regularly for bird health and this would prevent a build-up of midges/mosquitos. A number of the committee have bird baths and water features in their garden and provided the water is changed periodically, these do not cause a problem.
- On the plus side, midges and mosquitos are food for birds, bats, dragonflies and other predators, both as aquatic larvae and adults. For this reason, they tend to avoid small, shallow areas of water e.g. artificial containers and dustbin lids as it makes them easy prey, particularly the larvae that tend to stay near the surface.

<https://nurturing-nature.co.uk/wildlife-garden-videos/mosquitoes-in-my-wildlife-garden-pond-what-do-mosquitoes-eat-what-eats-them>

- Currently, we do not have any bye-laws (rules) to prevent, restrict or monitor "ponds" on our site. The proposed resolution to amend bye-law 4.7 "Water Supply" to include "Ponds", brought to the last AGM, was an attempt to rectify this, whilst still trying to increase biodiversity on our site, help to halt the decrease in pollinators and compensate for the decrease in natural ponds in our countryside affecting climate change.
- We are now seeking the opinion of all our members about this issue and this is part of the attached questionnaire. The resolution that was presented is copied below, with the additional wording in red font.

4.7 Water Supply and Ponds

- 4.7.1 All water tanks and water butts shall be either one metre from ground level to rim or have a lid on at all times when not being used. All water tanks provided by the Society shall have their lids secured at all times when not in use by means of the attached clips.
- 4.7.2 A member may not wash hands, or any item or produce in water tanks provided by the Society.
- 4.7.3 It is the responsibility of all members to empty and clean out these water tanks before the water is turned back on, usually at the end of March.
- 4.7.4 The use of hosepipes is not permitted except for watering the accessible beds where a water point is provided.

- 4.7.5 Ponds are NOT permitted on allotment plots without the prior written authority of the Committee. Application may be made using the appropriate application form.
- 4.7.6 For reasons of health and safety, permission will not be granted unless the proposed pond structure and condition meets the following requirement:-
- a) Its dimensions will not exceed 0.75 SqM and be no more than 300mm deep and will not be placed within 500mm of the nearest path.
 - b) There is to be no concrete, cement or other material restricted by the Bye Laws used in it's construction.
 - c) The pond should have a means of escape for creatures such as hedgehogs OR be covered with a grid of some sort to prevent them falling in. Chicken wire or netting is not sufficient.
 - d) The pond should not present any danger to children, ploholders or visitors.
 - e) The pond should be maintained and not be allowed to become an unpleasant, foul water source causing offence to others.
 - f) The pond will be inspected periodically (during Plot Inspections) and any deviation from the parameters or deterioration of the construction or condition will require immediate corrective action or the pond will be removed or filled in to eradicate the hazard.