

Two Uninvited Guests

The Asian Bush Mosquito and the Asian Tiger Mosquito

Just in time for West Nile Virus are two new mosquitos. The Northeast is experiencing a barrage of alien animals and plants. The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid threatens Maine's hemlock trees, the European Chafer is a grub species that can kill athletic fields and fine turfs in a matter of weeks, and milfoil is starting to infest Maine's lakes and now two species of mosquitos are expanding into Maine.

The Asian Bush Mosquito (*Ochleratatus japonicus*)

"Japonicus" was first detected in the United States in New Jersey and New York in 1998. Japonicus has been in Maine for at least two years. Larvae and adults have been discovered in southern Maine, including York County, Cumberland County and in Lewiston. Japonicus is a "day" biting species that breeds in container habitats such as tires, abandoned pools, pool covers and street catch basins. Japonicus has been determined to be an efficient vector of West Nile Virus and it readily feeds on humans as well as birds. It is suspected by many entomologists to be associated with the original West Nile Virus outbreak in New York City. Both the virus and Japonicus were first detected in New York City in 1999. Japonicus loves to breed in discarded tires.



Asian Bush Mosquito (*Ochleratatus japonicus*)

The Asian Tiger Mosquito (*Ochlerataus albopictus*)



Asian Tiger Mosquito (*Ochlerataus albopictus*)

The Asian Tiger mosquito has not been identified in Maine as of yet but its range has been expanding rapidly since its discovery in discarded tires in Houston, Texas in 1985. It is now found in thirty-three states including Massachusetts. Albopictus is very common in Massachusetts' cities and is likely in southern Maine. Albopictus is an aggressive "day" biter and, like Japonicus, loves to breed in discarded tires. Albopictus feeds on anything with a "pulse" and is an efficient vector of eastern Equine Encephalitis.

In summary, there have been no other documented introductions of new mosquito species in Maine until Japonicus. Both Japonicus and Albopictus are aggressive biters, efficient human disease vectors and are commonly found in urban environments (especially tires and street catch basins). Both species are prime targets for mosquito control programs associated with West Nile Virus suppression.