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GMCA Newsletter

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Washington Day, 2019

UPDATE

This year's AMCA Washington DC Day Representative was Annie Rich Thompson.

Key topics brought to Washington this year were:

- The Reducing EPA Duplication to Advance Pesticide Enforcement Act (REDTAPE Act) (H.R. 890)- Requesting reform of additional, unnecessary layer of costly administrative overhead by requiring entities to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Essentially, to cut back on "doubled up" permitting and restrictions required already under FIFRA.
- Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health Act (H.R. 345) (SMASH Act) – Requesting direct funds for municipal mosquito control entities to allow for a more stable source of funding and increased local mosquito control entities.
- Endangered species act – Requesting legislators take into account the need for protecting the public from vectors when creating endangered species protection legislation.

*We will need representatives to attend from Georgia next year. If you are interested, please check the AMCA Washington Day Conference website for application deadlines.

Annual Meeting

Lake Blackshear, Cordele, GA; Oct 16-18

This year's annual meeting was quite a success, considering the Board has been talking about moving the meeting from Athens for a number of years. Lake Blackshear is a beautiful place. While there were a few bumps along the way, and when isn't there, things went remarkably well.

We had a line up of interesting speakers, and their talks and meeting notes can be found at <http://www.gamosquito.org/Presentations2019.htm>. Because of our location we even had some speakers from Alabama. It is always great to hear what another State's mosquito control folks have been up to. And we had some of our tried and true speakers back for updates and new insights. We also had some great student speakers, more than we had ever had previously. It bodes well for the next generation of GMCA members. Thank you all for some interesting and educational talks.

Next year we will be back in Athens but are considering a location on the eastern coast of Georgia for our 2021 meeting. It should be lots of fun. As always, if you have a mosquito topic you would like to talk about, please contact a Board member to get added to the list of speakers. It is a great opportunity for students, as we are a very easy group to speak in front of. I know how scary speaking at meeting can be, but the GMCA Annual meeting is a great place to begin. And, if you are planning on speaking at the AMCA student competition, GMCA is a great place to try out your talk before jumping into deep water.

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Buzzing about Mosquitoes: Outreach in Richmond County

While educating our public is a key facet of mosquito control, it takes creativity, manpower, time, and extra effort to prepare for and attend educational and outreach events. It can be daunting to identify groups that are interested in hearing about mosquito control and vector-borne disease, and even more difficult to meet the right people to get plugged in.

Some ideas for groups to reach out to if you are interested in educational events are:

- Your local extension agent – they are always writing articles, putting together educational events for local gardeners and members of the community, and 4H programs always need youth educational events and speakers
- Reach out to your local school board – they often have a science curriculum staff member who can identify specific curriculum needs where your message will fit!
- Libraries, nature centers, and museums all have programming that may include insects or science topics that would allow you to come share interactive activities or speaking time.
- Community meetings for different commissioners, housing developments, or city hall gatherings may need speakers to come and talk about community issues – which include mosquito control!
- Watch out for local events like health fairs, career fairs, local festivals, and other events that may give you a booth to set up in and give out information.

To prepare:

- Have several lesson plans that meet the Georgia Standards of Excellence for teaching you can find online. This makes it easier for school boards and teachers to fit you into the student's learning topics.
- Have several presentations prepared that you can take for different age groups and levels of expertise – such as a small children's talk, a youth talk, and a talk for adult citizens.
- Have some interactive and eye-catching items such as an example of an insect life cycle, brochures, coloring pages, a microscope, or traps/collection equipment available for people to “show and tell” and interact with.
- Look online for great free content on mosquitoes, pollinators, and disease prevention.

It may be a lot of work, but it can also be a lot of fun, and putting a face to local mosquito control efforts can really bolster community support for your program. Additionally, with citizens informed about how to prevent mosquitoes in their yards and parks and protect themselves and their families from biting mosquitoes, our jobs get a little bit easier!

Annie Thompson

Spotlight on Annie Thompson, Entomologist at Richmond County Mosquito Control

My buddy at the Georgia Health Department came by to visit the other day and shared some super interesting bug information with me. My friend, Annie, has a master's degree from UGA in entomology and specialized in veterinary insects. She is now doing research and outreach for mosquito control with the health department.

Annie catches insect pests, identifies the species, and collaborates with the rest of the mosquito control team about methods to fight the little blood-sucking jerks that can ruin a backyard evening experience.

Mosquitos aren't the only thing that Annie monitors. She also catches ticks.

That is where our conversation went last week. As little as I like ticks, the information Annie gave me on these parasites was fascinating.

Annie told me that she catches more blacklegged deer ticks in the winter than in the summer. The reason that is significant is that these deer ticks are the carrier of Lyme disease. Symptoms of this tick-spread disease include fever, headache, fatigue, and skin rashes. When untreated, infection can spread to joints, the heart, and the nervous system. Lyme disease is a lot more common in the northeast than in Georgia, but we still get about 1,000 cases a year.

The life cycles and method of spreading diseases had me asking about 300 questions to my entomology friend.

When humans get bitten by a deer tick, we are what is called an accidental host. Deer ticks are aptly named because they are supposed to be grabbing onto ... deer. But it all goes back to the life cycle of these little suckers. Deer ticks are considered multi-host meaning that as the insect grows through the development stages, they attach to a different host.

bite, suck blood, remove the protein from the blood and inject the water from the blood back into the host (where diseases are transmitted). The cycle is repeated until they are full and then fall off to take a nap, grow a little and then look for a bigger host. In each phase of growth, ticks shed their skin and are ready to roll. Deer ticks start with little dinners, like field mice, grow to the next stage, attach to rabbits, and then complete the adult phase by attaching to deer.

Or if you are unlucky, they attach to you.

Ticks don't fall from trees and land on their victims. And they don't jump either. The ticks climb on grasses and hold their hands up and wait to catch a ride. When a passerby brushes the hiding place, the ticks grab on and start crawling for a spot to have lunch.

Annie gave me a list of things to do to protect yourself from ticks.

- Use DEET at higher percentages, but make sure to follow the label on the product.
- Tuck your pants inside your socks to expose less skin area when walking outdoors.
- Check yourself for ticks within 24 hours of walking in a susceptible locale. The 24-hour mark after biting is when the tick regurgitates the water back into your system to potentially give you Lyme disease.
- If you are unfortunate to get bitten by a tick, grab the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull straight away. DO NOT REMOVE IT WITH ... fire, alcohol or by twisting. Treat the area with a sanitizer.

I am glad to have folks like Annie and her crowd at the Health Department to keep me and the public educated and proactive about controlling some of these nasty pests. I'm looking forward to my next entomology session soon.

ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE (continued from p1)

Finally, I would like to introduce our new Board members:

President – Allen Hillman
VP – Laura Peaty

Directors

1-year: Tiffany Nguyen
2-year: Doug Nelson
3-year: Annie Thompson

Sustaining Board member – Jason Conrad
Secretary/Treasurer – Karin Farris
Past President – Steve Pavlovich

Representative

Cooperative Extension: Elmer Gray
Public Health: Rosmarie Kelly

If you are interested in being on the Board, we will have an opening for a 3-year member at our 2020 meeting. Directors move up each year until they become President, so it is a 5-year commitment. We will also soon be looking for a new Secretary/Treasurer, unless we can convince Karin to stay on for at least a few more years. Finally, if your company is a Sustaining member, we will need a new Sustaining Board member at the 2021 meeting, as Sustaining Board member is a 2-year commitment.

We also post various publications on the GMCA website and like to feature Georgia publications (<http://www.gamosquito.org/publications.htm>). If you would like your paper posted, please send the paper or a link to one of the Board members.

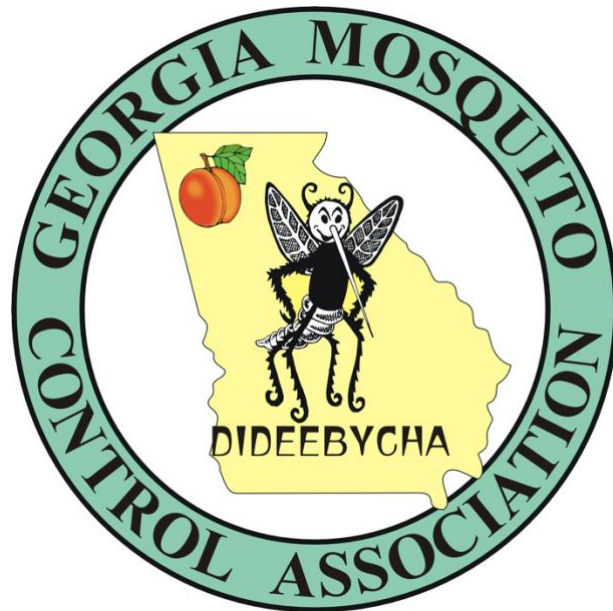
AMCA Registration is open for Portland Oregon Meeting on March 16-20th 2020.

Tick Collections in Richmond County

Richmond County Mosquito Control has reached one year of working with local veterinarians to collect ticks from companion animals in the area to submit to the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Nearly 100 ticks have been collected with participation from nine local veterinary clinics and the county animal shelter. While we know the general seasonality and local tick species, there have not been documented records of tick species and seasonality in this area, as with much of the state, and compiling a state-wide database is important for future vector-borne illness predictions and control efforts as many mosquito control entities nationwide begin to add tick-borne disease prevention to their list of priorities. In this part of the state, the lone star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*) is the primary summertime tick collected on pets, with the Black-legged deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) rearing its tiny mouthparts in the colder months. Other ticks collected included the American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*) and the Gulf Coast tick (*Amblyomma maculatum*). Some challenges with this project included changing staff at veterinary clinics, resulting in changes in point of contact, and animals being treated effectively resulting in low tick numbers brought in on animals to the clinics. This project is a collaboration between state public health entomologists, the GA Department of Agriculture (GDA), and Richmond County Mosquito Control. If you are interested in becoming involved in this growing survey of ticks in Georgia, please reach out to Dr. Tiffany Nguyen (thuyvithi.nguyen@dph.ga.gov) for information about how to participate.

Annie Thompson

The Georgia Department of Public Health is working with the GDA and (recently) UGA to do tick surveillance throughout Georgia. We appreciate the collaboration with these agencies and with Richmond County Mosquito Control.



The Georgia Mosquito Control Association

GMCA
c/o Karen Farris
Richmond County Public Health
Richmond County Mosquito Control
1916 North Leg Rd
Augusta, GA 30909

www.GAmosquito.org