

### 3 Nontoxic Ways to Keep Mosquitoes Out of Your Backyard BBQ

Enjoy the great outdoors—and your outdoor festivities—without blood-thirsty mosquitoes crashing the party

We at *Slim Fixin's* understand how essential outdoor entertaining is at this time of year. Unfortunately, along with the longer days and warm weather, summer brings pesky mosquitoes. Besides causing itchy welts, they can also carry disease. If you prefer not to mess with chemical bug-killers, here are a few natural solutions—safe for you, kids, and even pets—for keeping your alfresco soiree bug-free.

#### 1. Don't invite them to the party

Still or stagnant water is a welcome mat for mosquitoes because it's their ideal breeding environment. The best defense, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, is to get rid of any standing water in your yard. That means dispersing or draining any recent rainwater that has collected in gutters, buckets, furniture covers, kids' toys, or any other containers. If you have a birdbath or a fountain, make sure the water is changed at least once a week or that the water is circulating.

There are also plants that can help boost your yard's defenses. Catmint (or nepeta), marigolds, artemisia, and lavender each have mosquito-repelling qualities. Lighting a few traditional citronella candles also can't hurt.

#### 2. Keep the air moving

Installing a ceiling fan on your porch or above your patio area will keep air circulating and make a mosquito landing on you less likely. Add a repellent lantern with fan-dispersion technology. The fan disperses an all-natural DEET-free repellent that guarantees will keep an area with a 15-foot radius mosquito-free for up to 12 hours.

#### 3. Protect your exposed skin

Wearing long sleeves and pants will help deter biting critters, but that isn't always an option on hot summer nights. Try a nontoxic, good-smelling bug spray. Slim recommends Maria of *Maria's Living Fragrances* in Milford, CT, she uses a recipe that mosquitoes hate; it includes specific essential oils mixed. You can slather on as much of it as you'd like, with no ill effects.

