



It's mosquito season!

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It's the time of year when families want to spend a pleasant evening outside, but a swarm of mosquitoes could ruin everything.

First you hear the buzzing, then you feel the bite, and everyone knows what happens next...the itching and red mark it leaves behind.



Mosquitos...the pesky insect no one likes lurking in their yards.

Steve Presley, with Texas Tech, says, "This year is just another typical year. We've had some unusual rain fall patterns in mid May, late May and early June, but it's been very scattered thunder storms, very scattered rain fall.

The recent rain has mosquitoes on the rise which could mean West Nile virus.

Presley says, "When typical West Nile virus starts being transmitted in the bird-mosquito cycle it will later turn into the mosquito-human cycle."

Dr. Presley and his lab crew started testing for West Nile back in 2002.

Each year in may mosquito traps are place around the outside of Lubbock and checked twice a week for mosquitoes until the end of October.

Anna Hoffarth, a graduate researcher at Texas Tech, says "When we set out we use co2 traps, light traps so the mosquitoes are attracted to the co2 and the light and they are captured in a net. We bring them back to the lab were we identify them down to the species."

Hoffarth uses her microscope and utensils to separate the mosquitoes.

"We look at variations on their legs that sort of thing will allow us to identify them and from there we pull them based on there species."

After the pull the insects are ground up and go through a series of steps to isolate the possible virus.

"From there we load it on a gel using gel electro-freezes which separates those bands out and if there are any positive, if there is

any West Nile it will show up on that gel."

West Nile has not been found this season, but Presley says don't be surprised if the virus shows up in mid-July.