

## Don't Try to Predict—Protect

### Mosquitoes Thrive in Drought

Weather is always changing and hard to predict. One year, rains are torrential and the next there's a drought. Many people know that mosquitoes thrive in wet years and breed in wet places. But did you also know that a lack of rainwater doesn't stop the pesky mosquito from thriving and reproducing in the U.S.? These tiny insects are highly adaptable creatures and easily find other places to breed.

And that means, despite a drought or deluge, your pets are always at risk of getting heartworm disease.

### Mosquitoes Are Persistent

When drought conditions exist, many people assume mosquitoes and the diseases they carry are also gone. But despite dry conditions or lack of rainfall, there are plenty of breeding grounds, wherever you live.

While some mosquitoes breed and hatch in response to rainfall, others prefer old tin cans, tires, or they like to lay eggs in birdbaths. In urban areas, many breeding havens are man-made. When it's very dry, say experts, these pests will search out watered lawns, garden features and underground storm systems to lay their eggs.

Mosquitoes can also carry disease, despite a drought. In humans, West Nile virus doesn't disappear during droughts. And heartworm, which is transmitted through mosquito bites to pets, is also ever-present.

Heartworm disease is devastating. It can lead to severe lung disease, heart failure, organ damage and death. Both cats and dogs can develop heartworm from the bite of one infected mosquito. That's why the American Heartworm Society recommends that you Think 12: (1) get your pet tested every 12 months for heartworm and (2) give your pet a heartworm preventive 12 months of the year.

