

**GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS RESIDENTS FREE MINNOWS**

### ***Minnows, dunks and education are part of the county's mosquito prevention strategy***

To help residents keep their backyards free of mosquito breeding sites, the Westchester County Department of Health will give away free minnows for residential ponds and water features, along with mosquito dunks, advice and strategies to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile Virus, starting Friday.

These will be available at the Westchester County Airport, 2 Loop Road, West Harrison, 10604, as follows:

- Friday, May 11, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Saturday, May 12, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Friday, May 18, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Saturday, May 19, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Residents with ornamental ponds can add fathead minnows to the water. The minnows eat mosquito larvae, preventing them from maturing into biters. Dunks serve the same purpose in birdbaths, rain barrels and unused pools. Residents who plan to pick up minnows should bring a bucket or pail; minnows will be distributed in watertight plastic bags. To keep the minnows viable, residents should plan to bring them straight home and release them immediately into ponds with at least eight inches of water.

“With their hearty appetites, this baitfish can keep mosquitos from breeding in your pond and biting you in your own backyard,” said Sherlita Amler, MD, Commissioner of Health.

Any resident can help reduce the mosquito population, even without a pond.

“Mosquitoes can lay their eggs in a puddle, a flowerpot saucer or an old tire, so it’s extremely helpful to clear your yard and the pavement around your home of buckets, pails and toys that collect standing water and pour out any water that remains after it rains,” Amler added.

Large areas of standing water on public property that cannot easily be removed should be reported to the health department at (914) 813-5000.

For more information, download the “Keep Healthy and Bug Off” brochure at <http://health.westchestergov.com>.

### **About Westchester County**

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led

by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting [www.westchestergov.com](http://www.westchestergov.com)

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