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Sciensano and the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp declare the mosquito season open. This year, they are again counting on the help of the public to look for the Asian tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*). The contribution of citizens really makes a difference. Last year, notifications from citizens through the website www.SurveillanceMoustiques.be led to the discovery of 9 new locations, indicating a rise of the exotic mosquito species.

The [MEMO+ project](#) (Monitoring of Exotic Mosquitoes in Belgium) by Sciensano and ITM closely **monitors** the presence of exotic mosquitoes in Belgium, including **eight highway car parks** where exotic mosquitoes can enter the country via passenger cars and truck traffic. To gain more insight into the spread of the Asian tiger mosquito, Sciensano and ITM launched the **participation platform SurveillenceMoustiques/MuggenSurveillance**. The combination of active monitoring by researchers in the field and **the reporting of observations by citizens led to the finding of the tiger mosquito at 12 different locations in 2022**, three of which due to active and nine due to passive monitoring. This was much more than expected.

Sciensano researcher Marie Hermy: *"The results of last year clearly showed that **the contribution of citizens in detecting the tiger mosquito is essential and complements the active monitoring of entry points into the country. The public is encouraged to be vigilant and report any sightings from May until the end of October**".*

All eyes on the tiger mosquito



People who think they recognise the small black-and-white striped tiger mosquito can take a photo, surf to www.Surveillancemoustiques.be, go through the simple identification steps and then upload their photo. The website also provides information on the mosquito's characteristics, breeding sites, biting behaviour, diseases it can transmit, and tips to prevent mosquito bites and breeding sites. **A map with the results of the notifications** is also available on the website.



The tiger mosquito is a small black mosquito, usually between 4 and 5 millimetres in size. It can be recognized by the white line on its thorax. The hind legs have five white stripes, the last part of which is white.

Why are we looking for the tiger mosquito?

“It is crucial to monitor the presence of the tiger mosquito in Belgium, as it causes problems during the day with its aggressive biting behaviour. Moreover, she could transmit dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses, after biting an infected person.” Isra Deblauwe, entomologist at ITM, emphasizes that mapping the mosquito's occurrence helps the government control it better. *“The number of sightings has been increasing, and it is uncertain whether the tiger mosquito has been able to overwinter in Belgium. Close monitoring of entry sites and possible populations can help estimate the risk of virus transmission.”*

Become a mosquito catcher at Nerland Festival

For those interested in learning more about the tiger mosquito, **ITM and Sciensano are hosting a stand at the Nerdland science festival** during the weekend of 26-28 May 2023. Visitors can become mosquito catchers, collect live mosquito larvae, and playfully fight the tiger mosquito. You can find us in the experience zone 'Nerdland Jungle'.

The MEMO+ project is a collaboration between Sciensano, the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) and the Barcoding Facility for Organisms and Tissues of Policy Concern (BopCo) for the molecular identification of collected exotic mosquitoes. It is funded by the Federal and Federated Entities for Environment and Health through the National Environment and Health Action Plan (NEHAP).

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Associated health topics: Health and disease monitoring Health and environment

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