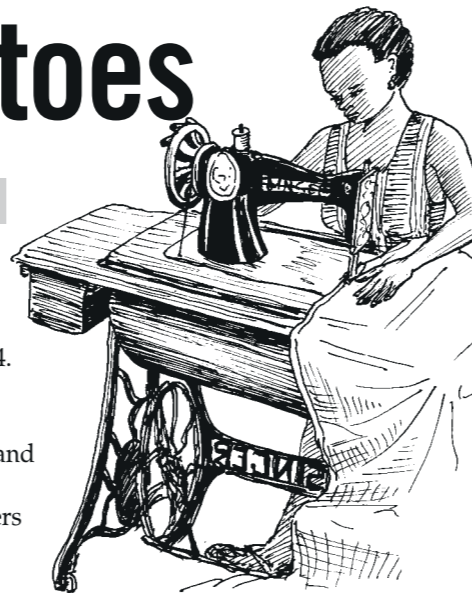


Keeping out mosquitoes

compiled by Uzo Okoli, Rod Mill and Isabel Carter

KEEPING MOSQUITOES OUT of your home is the most important way of protecting your family from malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases. Here are a number of practical steps you can take.

The importance of treating bed nets and curtains to protect from mosquito bites and malaria is explained on pages 3 and 4. Remember that all curtains and nets are many times more effective when treated. Insecticide-treated curtains on windows and doorways will prevent some mosquitoes from entering the house and kill any others on contact.



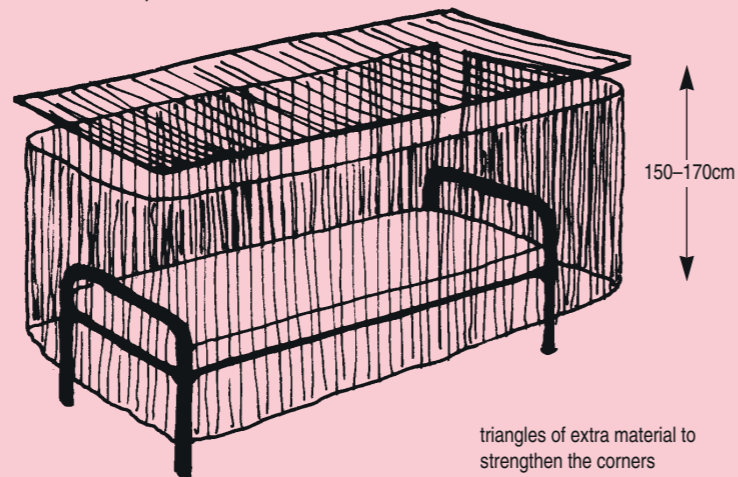
Making mosquito nets

It is much cheaper to buy netting in bulk and sew your own nets. The Preventive Health Programme in Sierra Leone, run by EFSL, trained local tailors to make nets and sold them at a subsidised price. (AHR TAG's directory, reviewed on page 14, gives details on how to buy bulk netting and chemicals.) Tailors could make 15 nets a day and people preferred them to imported nets. Heavy denier (100 or 75) is better, as the nets will be much stronger and less likely to tear. The cost was US \$5 per double net when buying netting in large quantities.

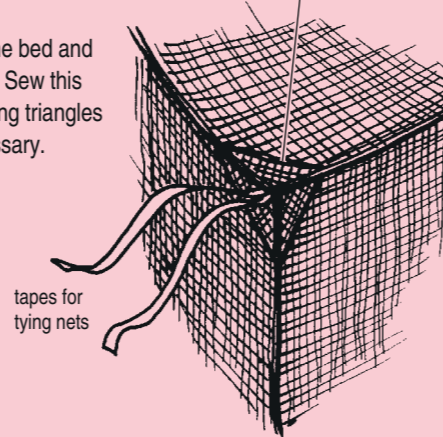
Square nets are easier to sew, give more protection and are more useful when several people are sharing the net.

Circular nets use less netting and are easier to hang, but they are more likely to allow contact with mosquitoes and are more difficult to make.

1 Cut out two pieces of netting. First measure around the bed and cut out this piece: (length + width) x 2, plus 20cm for hem. Allow plenty of drop for the net so it can be tucked in. If people sleep on mats on the floor, nets will need to be longer. Sew up the side seam.



2 Then measure the area of the bed and cut out to give the top piece. Sew this in, adding tapes and strengthening triangles in the four corners. Hem if necessary.

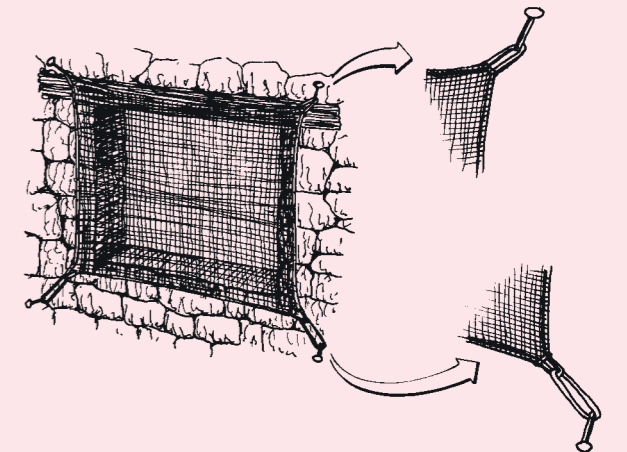
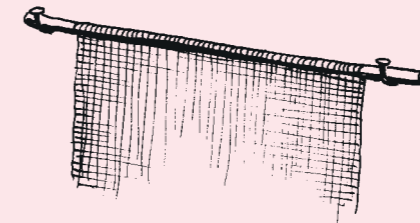


Doors, windows and roof spaces

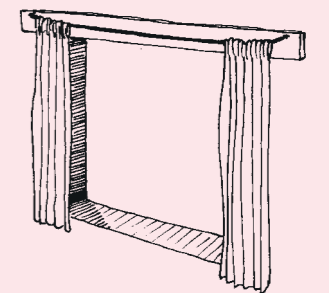
1 If possible, make frames for each window and door and fit mosquito wire.

2 If nets and wire are too expensive, consider fitting netting to the windows and doors. Hem a piece of netting, run string through the hem (use a safety pin) and hang the net onto nails.

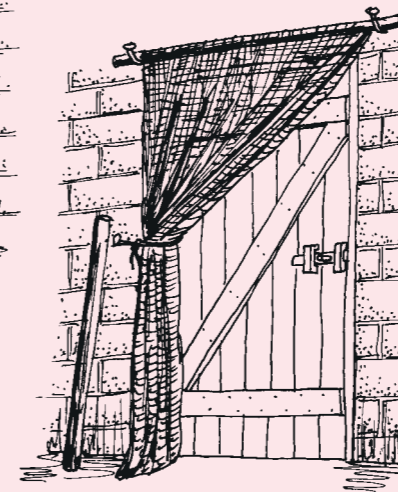
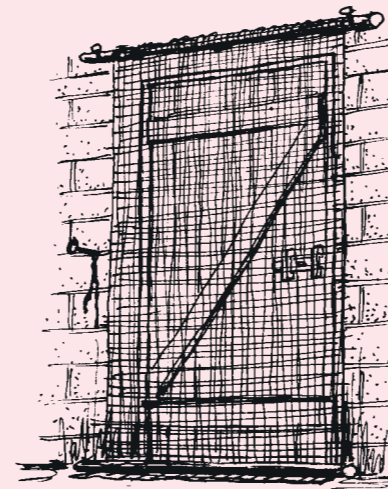
3 Alternatively, if you want to be able to quickly move the netting away each day, hem the top and bottom and push a thin piece of wood through both. Hang the top, using hooks or bent nails. The weight of the wood will let the net hang, covering the window. It can quickly be hung up on the nails.



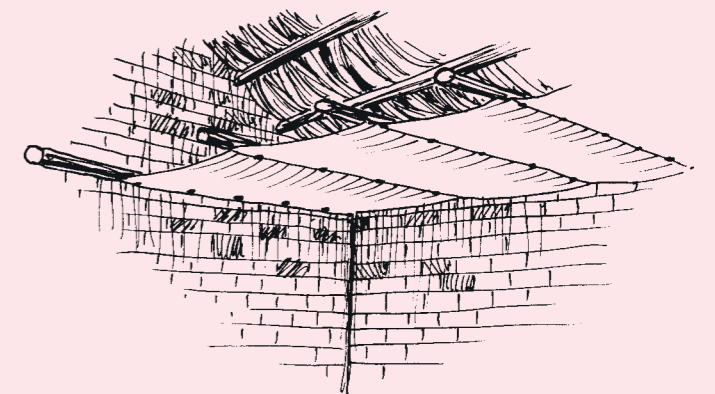
4 If you already have ordinary curtains, treat these with insecticide.



5 Make door curtains in the same way, hemming the top to hang them. At night use a piece of wood to keep the net in place. Tie the curtain back during the day to avoid damage.



6 If the house rafters are exposed, mosquitoes can enter easily. Make lightweight wooden frames and cover with local matting for a cheap but effective ceiling. Check for cracks and fill with scraps of netting. Alternatively, hang treated netting to cover the gap between the roof and the walls.



Other ideas...

- Burn dried orange peel, lemon grass or mint leaves in a pot. This is supposed to make mosquitoes



sleepy. Peppermint oil, citronella and geranium oils are also fairly effective.

- Sprinkle neem leaves on the floor. Are there other local leaves which are believed to keep away mosquitoes?

- Close windows and shutters before sunset to prevent large numbers of mosquitoes entering the house.

- Clear vegetation around the house to prevent mosquitoes breeding.

- Drain any containers (old tins, tyres etc) holding stagnant water. Even 1cm of water may be enough for larvae to grow.

- Fill up any pits or holes in the compound where mosquitoes can breed. If some open areas of water still remain – water butts, wells, etc – then try adding a little cooking oil. This will float on the surface and prevent mosquito larvae from breathing.