

AROUND THE HOME

Laser-wielding device is like an anti-aircraft system for mosquitoes

By Ben Coxworth
July 02, 2025



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It does so using a [LiDAR](#) (light detection and ranging) module which determines the locations of objects by emitting laser light pulses, then measuring how long it takes that laser light to be reflected back by whatever it hits. When a mosquito is detected in this fashion, a second [galvanometer](#)-directed laser is instantaneously used to fatally zap the insect.

It should be noted that mosquitoes won't be detected if they're flying any faster than 1 meter (3.3 ft) per second. For this reason, the device isn't ideal for use on speedier pest insects such as houseflies.



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Importantly, the device additionally uses millimeter-wave radar to scan its field of view for larger objects such as people and pets. If any of these are detected, its mosquito-zapping laser will not fire.

Power is supplied via a wall outlet, or by an optional rechargeable power bank. One charge of the latter should be good for either eight or 16 hours of use, depending on which of two models is selected.

Mind you, this is not the first time this idea has been promoted. The concept of a laser-based mosquito defence system took off back in 2007, when astrophysicist Lowell Wood (one of the architects of the USA's famous Reagan-era "Star Wars" missile defence initiative) raised the idea of a [smaller, mosquito-targeting laser system](#) at a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation brainstorming session on eliminating malaria.

Over the following years, prototypes were built, using freely available parts from cell phones and laser printers. A device was [patented and demonstrated by a company called Intellectual Ventures](#), which was more interested in owning the patent than making a product. By 2017, despite a [demo at TED](#), the prototype was still not safe for human eyes.

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can see the technology, allegedly in action, in the video below.

Potential backers should note that the device is presently still in functional prototype form. If you're looking for something that's already in production, you might want to check out the \$339 [Bzigo Iris](#). Although it doesn't kill mosquitoes, it does use a laser-tracking system to highlight them for easier swatting.


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Editor's note: This piece was amended on July 3, 2025, to include information about earlier work between 2007-2017, to address safety and compliance concerns, and to point out that this is the team's first Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign.


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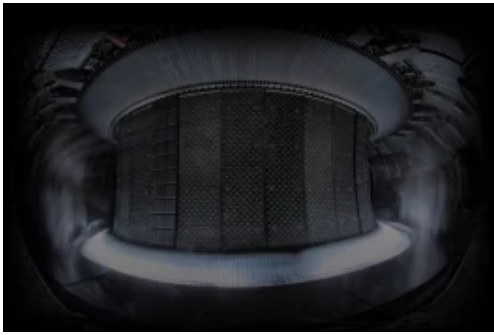
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paul314 JULY 2, 2025 11:39 AM

I had an engineering professor who drew up a design for this kind of machine 50 years ago based on the lasers in his lab. Only hitch was that it was the size of a small sofa and cost \$10-20K in parts.

Pierre Collet JULY 2, 2025 09:44 PM

Great! As prices lower down and technology improves, it could become a standard home appliance in the future, with, as a result, a real reduction in the number of malaria, and other mosquito-borne diseases...

JGTinNJ JULY 2, 2025 10:44 PM

Yes bring the price down and have three devices with one third the laser power that work simultaneously from different directions. That should help with safety, no?

Rick O JULY 3, 2025 05:17 AM

Sounds fascinating. But unless it's as gratifying as the sound of a bug zapper, I'm gonna pass.

kwalispecial JULY 3, 2025 08:07 AM

I'm pretty doubtful that it could differentiate between mosquitoes and other bugs, so what people are

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Rocky Stefano JULY 3, 2025 09:32 AM

As long as it doesn't blind someone...

Global JULY 3, 2025 09:38 AM

Your body can block a large enough area that the pests will approach, & attack through, unless you have a few of these, and nothing lands on you face which often happens, your better of with the sonic controllers available.

Uncle Anonymous JULY 3, 2025 10:13 AM

This is a great idea and I hope it works out well for the inventors. Personally, I'll pass because of the personal risks involved. Nothing in life is perfect and even though the risk of a malfunction is low, it isn't zero. All it would take is for a software issue to crop up and the owner plus guests and pets are at risk of being blinded.

vv211 JULY 3, 2025 11:12 AM

I read about this like 10y ago on a TedX

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