

Is Bill Gates behind the release of disease-fighting sterile GMO mosquitoes in Florida?

A multi-year research project to genetically modify [Aedes aegypti](#), a mosquito species that is known to carry and transmit infectious diseases to humans, was slated to move from the lab to the fields of Texas and Florida in mid-2021. Under the project, thousands of *A. aegypti* were altered to make their reproduction more difficult, thus slowing and eventually preventing the spread of mosquito-borne illnesses like Zika, and dengue fever.

But when the internet caught wind that Bill Gates may have been behind the project, posts circulated on social media that questioned the real motivation behind the project.

Snopes readers asked our team to dig deeper into the project and its rumored funding. In short, we found that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation did award grants to biotech company Oxitec for its work to develop a new strain of genetically modified mosquitoes nicknamed “Friendly™” to help reduce the spread of malaria. In April 2021, it was announced that approximately 150,000 mosquitos would be released across six locations in Florida.

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The *A. aegypti* mosquito is just 4% of the entire mosquito population in the Florida Keys, but is responsible for nearly all of the mosquito-borne disease transmitted to humans.

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