Resident Reporter

Western
Manufactured Housing Communities
Association

PUBLISHED BY WMA 455 CAPITOL MALL, SUITE 800 SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

IIII V 2006

Mosquitoes? What's all the

Buzzzzzzzzzz . . . about?

With the warm weather well upon us and the increase concern about mosquitoes and West Nile Virus, this month's *Resident Reporter* will outline information about mosquitoes, how to create and insect-free environment in your home, and how to avoid insect bites.

The skinny on Squitoes

According to the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, there are over 50 species of mosquitoes in California alone. Many are rare and don't pose a threat to citizens. However there are several species that like to attack people. Further, there are some that can transmit diseases, such as malaria, encephalitis and West Nile Virus. The mosquitoes of concern in California belong to the genera Culex, Aedes and Anopheles.¹

Identify them!

Adult mosquitoes are small insects with scale-like wings and long torsos. The female mosquitoes have a longer "beak" for sucking blood, while the male variety typically likes sucking plant juices (laying on the beach with an paper umbrella in their tropical drink). Mosquitoes lay larvae and hang around in still water. Once the female lays her eggs, they usually hatch in a day. Larvae go through three molting stages and then a few more once they're in the pupa stage until adulthood.

Watch out for the females!

Female mosquitoes are out on the prowl, sucking blood from animals and humans to help her develop fertilized eggs.

Mosquito bites can swell up hours after



happening, causing a red ringed white bump. This bump can itch for days and over-scratching the bite can cause it to bleed. Mosquito bites can transmit diseases, such as malaria and West Nile Virus,

so authorities in many areas take measures to reduce the mosquito population. These illnesses usually affect the young and elderly. But, anyone can be at risk. Any easy way to reduce mosquito populations in a residential area is the removal of standing water and use of repellents, such as DEET.

Spray, spray, spray!

Mosquitoes are usually managed area-wide by public agencies as part of local health departments. Often, mosquito abatement agencies will apply chemical pesticides to kill adult mosquitoes, threatening the chance of eggs being laid.

Whether mosquito abatement is available, homeowners should be taking on the problem around their home.

- ♦ Make sure all windows and doors are in good repair and have tight mesh screens.
- Check for standing water (habitats mosquitoes like).
- ♦ Drain standing water or treat it with a microbial insecticide (*Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *israelensis* or stocked with mosquito fish).

Practical Information
for Residents of Manufactured
Home Communities



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 Standing water in flowerpot saucers can also become a habitat for mosquitoes if left more than a few days.

Mosquito Fish are used worldwide for mosquito control. They are most effective in bodies of water. They can be obtained at most vector control districts.

Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. Israelensis attacks the mosquito larvae by ingestion. It is selective, killing species of larvae, mosquitoes and flies. Homeowners can purchase the "Mosquito Dunk" readily.

Outdoor Sprays. Use insecticide sprays or outdoor foggers to control mosquito population. This can be useful if having a gathering outside, but does not have a lasting effect.

Personal Protection is one of the most effective methods to avoid mosquito bites. When mosquitoes are dense, avoid being outdoors. They are known to bite predominantly in the morning afternoon and after the sun goes down.

Repellents. First, minimize the exposed skin...wear a hat, head net, long trousers and a long-sleeved shirt. Also, apply a mosquito repellent, such as DEET, which usually last about 4 hours.

Resources

University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. *Pest Notes*: February 1998. http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu.

Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. May 22, 2006. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosquito.

(Footnotes)

¹ University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. *Pest Notes*: February 1998.

Checklist of Possible Mosquito Sources Around the Home

Mosquito Sources Ponds	What to do to Reduce Mosquito Stock pond with fish or use Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. israelensis. Remove excess vegetation.
Swimming Pools	Keep water off cover. Maintain water quality at all times.
Tree holes	Fill hole with sand or mortar.
Plastic pools	Drain water when not in use or cover so mosquitoes cannot lay eggs.
Containers	Empty water. Store in an inverted position. Dispose. Cover so mosquitoes cannot lay eggs.
Bird Baths	Change water at least once a week.
Standing water	Eliminate by draining. Fill in low areas.
Watering troughs	Stock with fish or change water weekly.
Cooler drains	Prevent water from standing.
Street gutter or catch basins	Keep litter and garden debris out of gutter. Do not over water yard.
Cesspool or septic tanks	Seal and cover opening so mosquitoes can't lay eggs.
Roof gutters	Clean once a year to remove

Adapted from the Sacramento/Yolo Mosquito & Vector Control District

standing water.

debris.

Irrigated lawns or

fields

Avoid over irrigation. Drain