

MOSQUITOS – WHAT TO DO AND WHO TO CALL

Even if you're not personally susceptible to mosquito bites, please do your part to help protect your family, guests, and neighbors in Holmby Westwood

By Susan Reuben, VP HWPOA

LA Vector Control is sounding the alarm – they expect we'll have a bumper crop of mosquitos as temperatures heat up due to our recent heavy rains, and they warn that breeding rates have already increased. We're expected to have far more mosquitos than last Summer. Mosquito breeding rates are mind blowing: 1 mosquito multiplies to 200 in 7 days, 40,000 in 2 weeks and 8 million in just 21 days! In addition, three new species of the **Aedes Mosquito (ankle biter)** are now making Southern California their home. Mosquito eggs hatch in 1 week in Summer and 2 to 4 weeks in Winter. **It's a year-round problem.*

Even more alarming are the serious diseases mosquitos now carry: West Nile Virus, Dengue Fever, Zika Virus, Yellow Fever, and Chikungunya for humans and Heartworm for dogs and cats.

WHAT TO DO: Get rid of or treat places where mosquitos lay their eggs using mosquito repellent granules or "dunks" (doughnut looking discs) (available online at Amazon and at most hardware stores). Look for anything that can hold water for more than 3 days (Any item that can hold just a teaspoon of water can grow mosquitos):

Sprinkle mosquito repellent granules in tree holes, troughs, clogged rain gutters, tarps, BBQ pits, water holding plants (like bromeliads), potted plant saucers, rain barrels, leaky hoses, clogged drains, garden drains and drain boxes, vent pipes on septic tanks, tire swings, sump pumps, and garden spotlights which face upwards. Replace in a timely manner according to instructions on the label.

Store cans, buckets, and wheelbarrows upside down. Store toys, watering cans, and unused hoses in your garage or garden shed.

Drop mosquito repellent "dunks" into unused pools, birdbaths, and ponds. They will not harm birds or animals. Replace as they break down.

If you need to leave water outside for a pet, take it inside at night and wash the bowl thoroughly.

If rain or sprinkler water collects on your spa or pool cover, your barbeque cover, or trashcan covers, remove it as soon as possible.

Remove saucers from under planters and clear any area on your property where leaves or plant debris collect and hold rainwater. Clean your gutters regularly.

WHAT YOU CAN DO PERSONALLY TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY:

I'm an avid gardener and enjoy working in my garden daily. I'm also very susceptible to mosquito bites and don't like applying Deet to my skin. **Sawyer Picaridin Mosquito Repellent** lotion (available on Amazon) really provides the 14 hours of protection stated on the label. I apply the lotion all over my body before getting dressed, and it somehow makes me invisible to mosquitos. But, if I miss a place, mosquitos will definitely find it. Mosquitos bite through light weight clothing. However, they don't seem to bite through jeans. I also have several solar and electrical mosquito zappers (also available on Amazon) around the garden – one hangs from a tree, one sits on a table, several are in the ground and also provide lighting, and one is on our terrace. You can provide your guests with Natrapel 20% Picaridin wipes which give up to 12 hours of protection (Amazon).

Some plants encourage mosquitos and some plants repel mosquitos. Eliminate taro, papyrus, water lilies and water hyacinths from your garden because their nectar attracts mosquitos. **Plants that repel mosquitos** include lavender, marigolds, citronella or lemon grass, catmint, rosemary, basil, citronella-scented geranium, bee balm, mint, ageratum, sage, and allium.

WHO TO CALL: If you need help regarding mosquitos, ticks, Africanized bees, bee hives and swarms, or red imported fire ants, call **LA County Vector Control at 310-915-7370** or go to **lawestvector.org**. To report a dead bird, call **877-968-2473** or report online at **westnile.ca.gov**.

***What is a Vector?** Any insect (or other arthropod) capable of transmitting the causative agent of human disease or capable of producing human discomfort or injury.