



Fight

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
PESTICIDE REGULATION

the **bite!**

HOME & GARDEN CHECKLIST

Don't grow your own mosquitoes



There are more than 50 species of mosquitoes in California. They can be found everywhere from high mountain meadows to deserts below sea level. Mosquitoes have always been a nuisance, but until recently, they seldom posed a health threat. That changed with the arrival of West Nile virus in California, a disease spread by mosquito bites.

Standing water is the mosquito nursery. Mosquitoes can hatch in a week or less, in as little as a half-inch of water. If you get rid of still or stagnant water at least weekly, you will keep many mosquitoes from breeding and take a big step toward protecting yourself and your family.

Take these steps to make outdoor activities around your home safer and more enjoyable:

ANIMALS

Dogs and cats can be infected but rarely become ill. They do not spread the virus. West Nile virus is deadly for horses, but a vaccine is available. Many bird species can die or become ill. To protect pet birds indoors, make sure your window and door screens are bug-tight. Cover outdoor cages and aviaries with mosquito netting.

BIRDBATHS

Clean or hose out weekly.

BOATS

Empty accumulated water from boats, canoes, and cargo trailers.

BTi

A natural bacteria that kills mosquito and fly larvae yet is non-toxic to fish and animals when used properly. Kills mosquito larvae developing in water. (See *dunks*.)

CHAINLINK FENCES

Water can collect in fence posts. Cap them.

CONTAINERS

Cover or turn upside down so they won't hold water. This includes boxes, buckets, cans, cups, jars, and pots.

DAWN AND DUSK

Time when biting mosquitoes are most active since they avoid the heat of day.

DRAINS

Keep outdoor drains flowing freely.

DUNKS

Doughnut-shaped blocks that contain BTi, a pesticide that kills mosquito larvae but is non-toxic to animals and fish. Dunks dissolve slowly in water. Available at hardware and garden stores.



HOME & GARDEN CHECKLIST

GARDEN FURNITURE AND ORNAMENTS

Check for nooks and crannies that hold water, and drain or flush weekly.

IRRIGATION

Keep water from collecting in low-lying areas by not over-irrigating.

LANDSCAPING

Replace plastic mulch with landscape fabric that prevents weeds yet allows water through.

LEAKS

Fix faucets, air conditioners and hoses that leak and puddle.

LIGHTING

Check garden lights. Drain water from inside and off the caps.

MOSQUITO FISH

These tiny fish chow down on mosquito larvae that have just hatched from eggs. Many vector control agencies will supply mosquito fish without charge to residents to put in ornamental ponds, unused swimming pools, ditches, sumps, water troughs, and similar sites.

PET WATER BOWLS

Change water twice a week.

PLAY SETS

Drill drainage holes in tire swings and in playground equipment where water can collect.

PONDS

You can grow a lot of mosquitoes in a water garden if you let the water stagnate. Aerate ornamental pools, stock them with *mosquito fish* (see above), or use *mosquito dunks*.

POOL COVERS

Sweep off standing water.

POOLS/SPAS

Clean and chlorinate even when not in use. A pool left untended by a family on vacation for a month can produce enough mosquitoes to prompt neighborhood-wide complaints.

POTTED PLANTS

Don't overwater. Drain saucers weekly with a turkey baster or flush with garden hose.

RAIN GUTTERS

Keep clear of leaves and other debris.

RECYCLING BINS

Drill drainage holes in bottom. (If drainage holes are in the sides, enough water can collect in the bottom for mosquitoes to breed in.) Before you put cans in the bin, cut off top and bottom and flatten. Invert glass jars. Crush soft drink bottles and cans. Store newspapers on end, not flat.

SCREENS

Install and maintain tight-fitting window and door screens.

SHRUBBERY

Trim and thin shrubs and bushy plants. In the heat of the day, mosquitoes like to hide there.

TIRES

Properly dispose of old tires – they are the most common mosquito breeding ground in the country. Drill drainage holes in tires used in retaining walls, landscaping, and swing sets.

TRAPS

In tests, traps that use carbon dioxide (CO₂) have been effective at reducing mosquito populations in the immediate area. On the other hand, university studies have repeatedly demonstrated that ultrasonic repellers (that emit high-frequency sound) and bug "zappers" (bugs attracted to a light are electrocuted) do not reduce mosquito numbers.

TRASH

Get rid of anything that can hold water, including cans, cups, foil, plastic and paper.

TRASH CANS AND TRASH BINS

Keep tightly covered. Remove water inside and underneath.

TREES

Eliminate water from dead tree stumps and hollow areas of live trees. Fill cavities with sand or mortar.

UMBRELLAS AND BASKETBALL HOOPS

If the base for your table umbrella or basketball hoop is filled with water, cap it tightly and seal with duct tape. Or you can fill it with sand instead.

WADING POOLS AND WHEELBARROWS

Store vertically or turned over.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact your local mosquito control district listed in the government section near the front of your phone book or on the Web at www.mvacac.org/agencies.htm.