

Invasive *Aedes* Mosquitoes in San Mateo County



Are there invasive mosquitoes in San Mateo County?

Invasive *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes (sometimes called yellow fever mosquitoes) were discovered in San Mateo County in 2013. These mosquitoes are not native to California, but were introduced by human activity. They are small, dark-colored mosquitoes that bite humans during the day. Invasive *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes (sometimes called Asian tiger mosquitoes) are not currently found in San Mateo County, but could be in the future.

Why are invasive mosquitoes a problem?

Invasive *Aedes* mosquitoes are a concern because they can transmit diseases that can make humans very sick, including dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses. These diseases have never been transmitted in San Mateo County before because our native mosquitoes cannot transmit them.

However, if invasive mosquitoes become established in our county, it is possible that returning travelers infected with these diseases could transmit them to mosquitoes, and other people could be infected.

The best way to reduce the risk of these diseases is to keep invasive *Aedes* mosquitoes from becoming established in our county.

What is the District doing about invasive mosquitoes in San Mateo County?

Since 2013, the District has engaged in an aggressive program intended to control, and eventually, eradicate, invasive *Aedes aegypti* mosquito populations.

The District laboratory searches for invasive mosquitoes throughout the county using several kinds of mosquito traps. District technicians inspect front and back yards in areas where invasive *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes have been found before. They help property owners get rid of standing water where mosquitoes might be breeding, and they collect samples of mosquito larvae to see if invasive mosquitoes are present. During the summer when mosquitoes develop more quickly, the District employs extra staff to help search for invasive mosquitoes.

The District's invasive *Aedes aegypti* eradication program has been very successful, but it is important to continue the program even once invasive *Aedes* mosquitoes are no longer found, since invasive mosquitoes can be introduced into our county at any time.



Don't Just Dump and Drain

Invasive Aedes mosquito eggs can survive being dried out for many months. When an empty container refills with water, such as after rain, the eggs can develop into adult mosquitoes in only a week.

To be sure that this doesn't happen, all containers that are left outdoors should be emptied and scrubbed at least weekly to remove any mosquito eggs that have been laid there. This includes plant saucers, birdbaths, and pet water bowls.

Protect Yourself from Mosquito Bites

Dress Properly

Keep skin covered by wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors. Choose loose-fitting clothing; mosquitoes may be able to bite through tight-fitting garments.

Use Insect Repellent

Look for products containing DEET, IR3535, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always apply repellent according to the label directions.

Repair Door and Window Screens

Keep mosquitoes out of your home by ensuring that door and window screens fit tightly and are in good condition.

Stay Aware

Educate yourself about the diseases mosquitoes transmit in your community, and contact your doctor if you believe you may have a mosquito-borne disease.



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Don't Breed Mosquitoes

Invasive Aedes mosquitoes prefer to lay their eggs in man-made containers, and can reproduce in amounts of water as small as a soda bottle cap. The best way to prevent mosquito bites is by dumping, draining, or treating standing water where mosquito eggs, larvae, and pupae are found.

- Turn over, cover, or dispose of small containers
- Screen/cover rain barrels or other water collection devices
- Stock ponds, fountains, water troughs, and unused pools with mosquito fish
- Change water in birdbaths and pet bowls weekly
- Keep gutters clear of leaves and debris
- Repair leaks that create standing water
- Fill tree holes with sand
- Avoid over-watering

San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District

(650) 344 - 8592
1351 Rollins Road
Burlingame, CA 94010

Monday-Friday
8 am to 4:30 pm

www.smcmvcd.org