

## WEST VALLEY MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL



# *The Valley Buzz!*

## Hot August Nights can bring *Aedes* Bites!

August is here and seems to be bringing with it sticky, humid heat. High temperatures coupled with increased humidity are perfect conditions for mosquitoes, especially that troublesome newcomer, *Aedes aegypti*. Historically, we tend to see increases in *Aedes* populations later in the summer as compared to our native mosquitoes. This humid portent is a reminder of how important yard hygiene is, and how important it is to start early and maintain good “anti-skeeter” practices.

**Drain:** Check your yard weekly for standing water; remember even a seemingly miniscule amount of water can breed hundreds of mosquitoes.

**Scrub:** *Aedes aegypti* lay their eggs on the sides of containers, usually just above the waterline. Scrubbing containers can dislodge eggs and when you rinse and dump the containers, you get rid of those future bloodsuckers!

**Barriers:** *Aedes* like to hide in dark areas, out of direct sunlight. Garages, porches, and heavy vegetation can provide hiding spots for mosquitoes – I personally have even found them hiding in our pantry inside!! Keep garages closed, make sure door and window screens are tight-fitting and be alert when going in and out of the home, they can and will follow you inside!

**Repellents:** An EPA registered repellent is a vital part of summer living now, and the ones with the active ingredients DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, and IR3535 are extensively tested and are shown to be the longest lasting and most effective.



Left: Saucer with small amount of water Right: Installing window screens

## Sterile Male Releases Packing a Knockout Punch!

This year we implemented the release of sterile male *Aedes aegypti* as a regular part of our Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy.

Sterile males are created by first collecting local wild mosquitoes and rearing them in our laboratory. Eggs are hatched and males are separated and packaged to be irradiated using our in-house X-Ray machine. The males receive just enough X-rays to disrupt their ability to create viable sperm. The males are then released into areas of high activity to mate with the wild females. A successful coupling will result in inviable eggs. This mosquito control strategy uses the mosquito's own behaviors against them: male mosquitoes do not bite, and once a female mates, she usually will not mate again, so for her lifetime any eggs she lays will not hatch!



The District has been regularly releasing sterile male *Aedes aegypti* since April of this year, and we are seeing significant reductions in our *Aedes* populations compared to prior years. We are excited to be able to implement this new form of mosquito management that reduces chemical pesticide use, doesn't disrupt our residents, and provides a significant amount of mosquito population reduction.



Sterile males being released

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## Spatial Repellents, a Novel and Emerging Technology

Many residents we speak with are looking for as many options as possible to keep mosquitoes away. We have had questions about the efficacy of planting citronella, candles, sonic devices, and electronic zappers.

While most of these options have very little to no effectiveness (i.e., “zappers” tend to kill much more beneficial insects than mosquitoes), there are some emerging technologies that provide another option to traditional repellents. Emerging spatial repellents are typically an electronic device that aerosolizes a material that repels mosquitoes. The two leading ingredients for spatial repellents are the volatile pyrethroids metafluthrin and transfluthrin and some botanical compounds (terpenoids).

While these are showing some promise, there is still more research to be done, there is still the issue of wind and fans dispersing the product making it less effective, and the novelty of the technology is still cost prohibitive (Thermacell, a commercially available spatial repellent device, costs \$699.00 for an estimated 100 hours of repellency).


Our recommendation is still the use of EPA registered and CDC recommended repellents worn on the skin or clothing. You may need to try several different types to find what works for you, and always read the label for proper usage instructions.


If you are experiencing mosquito issues, do not hesitate to call us and schedule an inspection. Our State certified technicians can determine how best to help you get through this summer!





Picture of topical repellents - topical repellents are much less expensive and less affected by environmental factors like wind.

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