

Don't Grow Your Own Mosquitoes!



Buildings & Grounds Checklist to Help Control Mosquitoes

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 students, teachers and staff.

Take these steps at your school district to make outdoor activities safer and more enjoyable.

- Birdbaths-Clean or hose out weekly.
- 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.
- Drains-Keep outdoor drains flowing freely.
- 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.
- Outdoor furniture and ornaments-Check for nooks and crannies that hold water, and drain or flush weekly.
- Play sets-Drill drainage holes in tire swings and in playground equipment where water can collect.
- Pool covers-Sweep off standing water.
- Pools-Clean and chlorinate even when not in use.
- 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.
- 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 vector control district listed in the government section near the front of your phone book or on the Web at www.mvacac.org/agencies.htm.

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