

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEADLINE: Hidden Dangers in Your Backyard

Warm summer evenings engender images of outdoor barbeques, poolside parties, and leisurely hours in the garden. Lurking just below our consciousness – at least temporarily, are the often forgotten distractions of summer; wasps, voracious ants, and irritating flies. But there is one summer distraction that can also be dangerous, *mosquitoes*.

When the weather warms up, many relish a relaxing dip in the pool, or the cooling effects of a nice backyard fish pond or water fountain. But let these go untended and the real hazards of summer begin to emerge - *literally*.



Mosquitoes too relish ponds, pools, and fountains; however they like theirs a little on the “green” side. Female mosquitoes, after securing a blood meal, search for standing water high in bacteria and algae to lay their eggs. Larvae, or “wrigglers,” hatch in the water in only a few days and can mature to biting adults in just one week.

West Nile virus (WNV) is here in the United States, and with this new mosquito-transmitted virus lurking on our horizon, we can't take any chances. Throw on some sandals and take a stroll around your home. Check to make sure your ponds are clean and filtered properly and get that pool or spa back into summertime condition. Look close - under flowerpots, at the base of your sprinklers and faucets, in the kid's toys and tire swings, and even in stored or tarp-covered boats and other 'big kid' toys. Just ½ inch of standing water can breed tremendous numbers of mosquitoes. **DUMP IT OUT!**

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Residents and businesses are urged to check their property weekly and eliminate *any* standing or stagnant water. Contact the District if immature stages of mosquitoes are present, and the source can not be removed immediately. "These problems need to be addressed *now*" stresses Steve West, District Manager of the San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District.



According to West, "One green pool can breed thousands of mosquitoes in only a week's time. This is an unacceptable risk and we need our residents to assist us. Breaking the mosquito life cycle is our most powerful tool to avoid mosquito-transmitted disease."

West Nile virus is a virus of wild birds transmitted by mosquitoes. It devastated local bird populations in epidemics throughout the Eastern and Midwest United States last year, killing nearly 90% of infected crows and Corvids. Although far less serious in humans, WNV can cause life threatening illness in the most severe cases. The Centers for Disease Control recorded 4,156 cases and 284 deaths last year alone. Over 15,000 birds and 14,717 horses were found in 2002 to be infected with WNV.

Experts at the District report the virus has not been found in this area yet, but they do expect to find evidence of it here soon. "We have been preparing for West Nile virus by increasing surveillance, control, and outreach activities since 2000." But, West added, "We can't do it alone, residential sources of standing water hinder our ability to manage the potential problem West Nile virus may pose here in the San Gabriel Valley."



The District urges its residents to contact them when they observe green pools/spas or if they have problems with mosquitoes through their website at www.sgvmosquito.org or by calling (626) 814-9466.

Mosquitofish are available at the District or can be delivered to district residents at no cost for ponds, water gardens, large fountains, and water troughs. The District provides mosquito and other vector control services as a public service to residents in the San Gabriel Valley. Funding is secured through an annual benefit assessment; therefore, residents will not be charged when they request assistance.

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