

MOSQUITOES

NATIVE MOSQUITO SPECIES OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY

***Culex tarsalis*:** This species is referred to as the encephalitis mosquito and is typically found in rural areas. It lays eggs in habitats such as flooded



agricultural fields, fresh water, high salinity brackish water, and backyard stagnant pools. It is light brown with white markings on the abdomen and typically bites between dusk and dawn. It prefers to feed on birds, but will readily make a meal of cattle, horses, and humans. It is the primary vector of both the West Nile virus (WNV) and St. Louis encephalitis virus (SLEV).

***Culex quinquefasciatus*:** This species is known as the southern house mosquito and is often found in the Valley's urban areas. It lays eggs in foul standing water



sources such as septic tanks, storm drains, and neglected pools. It is brown and typically feeds between dusk and dawn. It is a vector of WNV in the Valley.

***Psorophora columbiae*:** This species, found in rural areas, often breeds in irrigated fields



and pastures. It can develop from egg to adult in 4 days, but is not known to transmit any viruses in the Valley. It is mainly a pest.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/MosquitoesandMosquitoBorneDiseases.aspx>

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT NATIVE VALLEY MOSQUITOES

The desert may seem an unlikely place for mosquitoes. However, more than a dozen species thrive in the Coachella Valley. Mosquitoes breed in aquatic environments where the water is still. Mosquito breeding habitats include marshes around the Salton Sea to birdbaths, ponds, neglected pools, water runoff in storm drains, and backyard containers. Female mosquitoes require blood from vertebrates such as birds, people, pets, and livestock to produce eggs, and can transmit viruses such as West Nile (WNV) and St. Louis encephalitis (SLEV) while biting. Most people will not get sick but those that do can develop very serious illnesses.

MOSQUITO ENVIRONMENT AND BEHAVIOR

By knowing a mosquito's life stages, you can help prevent them around your home.

Egg Stage: Mosquitoes lay eggs singly or in clusters on the surface of water. They hatch into larvae within 2 to 3 days. Others lay eggs on damp soil and hatch after the next flooding.

Larval Stage: Larvae live in water and feed on microorganisms and organic matter. This stage lasts 3 to 14 days.

Pupal Stage: It takes 2 to 3 days for a pupa to transform into an adult mosquito. It does not feed during this stage.

Adult Stage: The newly emerged adult rests on the water surface until its wings are dried.

Other important facts:

- Mosquitoes sense CO₂ (exhaled by mammals while breathing) up to 100 ft.
- Mosquitoes see potential blood meals that are in contrast with the background.
- Mosquitoes detect heat from warm blooded animals from a short distance.

What You Can Do to Control Mosquitoes:

Reduce Standing Water!

- * Empty containers that hold water and drain standing water in your yard.
- * Maintain swimming pools.
- * Change pet water bowls daily and bird baths weekly.
- * Stock ornamental ponds with mosquitofish (call CVMVCD)
- * Be sure not to cause irrigation runoff onto streets and fields.

Protect yourself!

- * Avoid the outdoors at dawn and dusk – when mosquitoes often bite.
- * Wear long sleeve shirts, pants, and socks to prevent bites.
- * Use repellent with DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or picaridin.
- * Install and maintain screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.

What We Do: Certified vector control technicians conduct surveillance, eliminate standing water sites if possible, and apply environmentally sound control products to breeding sites as necessary. In some cases, adult control products are applied from ground or air units when virus surveillance indicates a potential outbreak of mosquito-borne virus. For more information, contact the District at (760) 342-8287 or visit our website at www.cvmvcd.org.

