



Merced County Mosquito Abatement District
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INVASIVE *Aedes aegypti* MOSQUITOES FOUND IN LOS BANOS, CA

MERCED, CA– The Merced County Mosquito Abatement District identified *Aedes aegypti*, also known as the yellow fever mosquito, in the city of Los Banos (zip code 95635). This mosquito is capable of transmitting several human diseases, including dengue, chikungunya, yellow fever, and Zika. This mosquito is not native to California and is the second location detected in Merced County. The first detection occurred last year in the city of Merced. Since 2013, *Aedes aegypti* has been detected in 13 other California counties, primarily south of Merced.

The Merced County Mosquito Abatement District is evaluating the extent of the infestation and will aggressively target problem areas to prevent its spread. These efforts will include door-to-door inspections of residential properties for standing water where mosquitoes can breed, increased surveillance through trapping, eliminating mosquito breeding sources, larval control, and ultra-low volume adulticiding (fogging) as necessary to target the invasive mosquitoes.

“This is the first detection of *Aedes aegypti* in Los Banos and the second city in Merced County to harbor the invasive *Aedes* mosquito. Having *Aedes aegypti* in our District is very concerning as it is an efficient vector in spreading Zika, dengue, chikungunya, and yellow fever viruses,” said Rhiannon Jones, General Manager of Merced County Mosquito Abatement District. While these viruses are not currently transmitted in California, they are periodically introduced by international travelers. If a large population of *Aedes aegypti* is established in the area, a single travel-associated case of one of these diseases could introduce the virus to local mosquitoes, and Merced County residents could be at risk of becoming infected.

Aedes aegypti is a small (approx. ¼ inch), black and white day-biting mosquito that prefers to feed on humans. It lives in urban habitats, and lays its eggs just above the water surface in small containers such as flower pots, plant saucers, pet bowls, and bird baths. Please inspect your property and immediately discard any standing water. If you live in an urban residential area and are being bitten by mosquitoes during the day you are encouraged to contact Merced County Mosquito Abatement District.

Residents can reduce chances of being bitten by *Aedes aegypti* or other mosquitoes by taking the following precautions:

- **Drain** standing water. Mosquitoes prefer to lay eggs in stagnant water.
- **Defend** yourself against mosquitoes using repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, IR3535 or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are present, typically **Dawn** and **Dusk**.
- **Report neglected swimming pools** to the District. *Anonymous calls accepted.*

To report mosquito-breeding problem areas and request service, Merced County residents should contact Merced County Mosquito Abatement District at (209) 722-1527 [main], (800) 622-3242 [toll free], or www.mcmosquito.org.

Additional information on *Aedes aegypti* can be found at the California Department of Public Health webpage: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Aedes-aegypti-and-Aedes-albopictus-mosquitoes.aspx>

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