



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) ABOUT INVASIVE *Aedes aegypti* MOSQUITOES**



### **AEDES AEGYPTI**

#### **Q. What is the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito?**

A. *Aedes aegypti* is an invasive mosquito that is native to the tropical and subtropical areas of the world. Because they aren't native to California, they don't thrive in the state's natural areas, but they live and thrive in cities near people.

#### **Q. Has this mosquito been detected in the county before?**

A. Yes. This is the second time this mosquito species has been detected in Santa Clara County. We carried out a successful eradication plan the first time the invasive mosquito was detected, which occurred in the fall of 2022 at an industrial facility in North San José. *Aedes aegypti* is present in 19 counties in California. Our neighboring counties of Contra Costa and Santa Cruz

have previously detected these mosquitoes but successfully eradicated them.

**Q. Where do *Aedes aegypti* breed?**

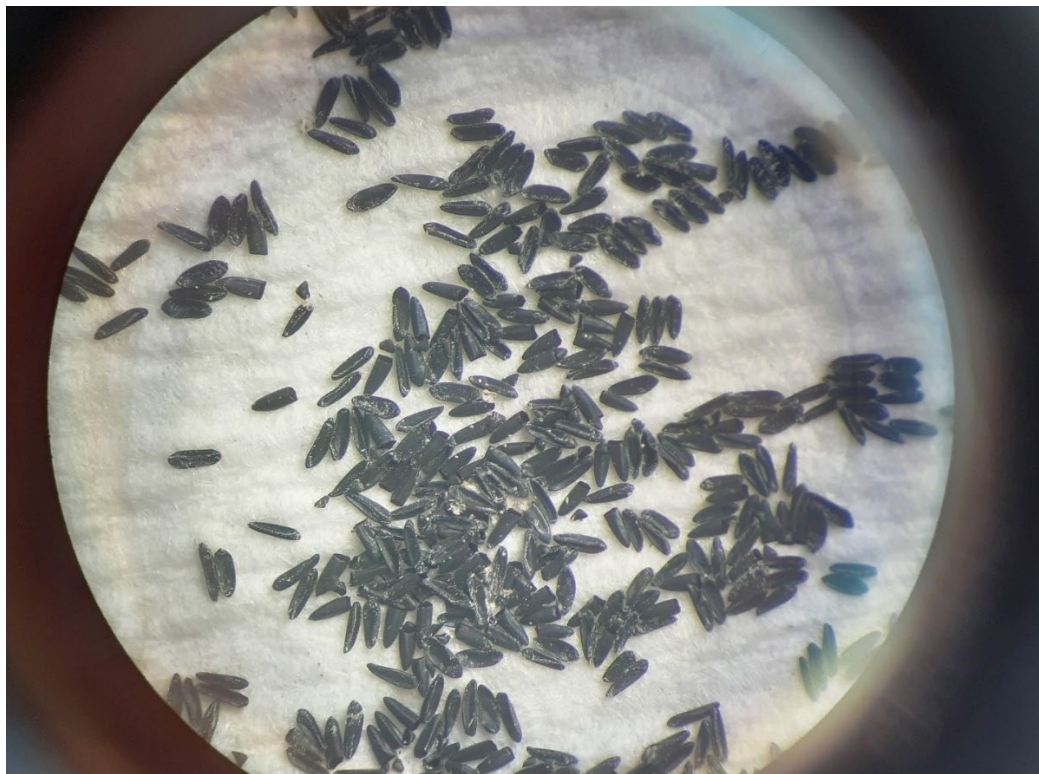
A. They live in urban environments and often in people’s backyards – areas where mosquito and vector control districts can’t easily inspect.

*Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes are “container breeders,” meaning they prefer to lay their eggs on the inside of containers filled with water or on stems of plants growing in water. These eggs can survive for more than a year (even if they dry up) and will hatch when they come in contact with water again. They will lay eggs in a container as small as a bottle cap.

**Q. What do they look like?**

A. They are a small (about ¼ inch) mosquito with black and white stripes on their back and legs.

Their eggs, shown below under a microscope, are about half a millimeter in size and look to the naked eye like tiny bits of dirt.



**Q. Why is this mosquito of concern?**

A. This mosquito can transmit a variety of viruses, including chikungunya, dengue, yellow fever and Zika. It prefers to feed on humans, increasing the chance of human infection. There were three locally transmitted dengue cases in Southern California in 2023.

**Q. Where have these mosquitoes been found?**

A. As of April 11, 2024, six adult female *Aedes aegypti* have been detected on Machado Lane near Story Road in East San José. We are enhancing our surveillance to determine the spread of the invasive mosquito.

**Q. When are these mosquitoes most active?**

A. Unlike native mosquitoes that are most active during dusk and dawn, *Aedes aegypti* is an aggressive mosquito that will bite any time of day (even indoors) and will bite multiple times. They are known as “ankle biters” because they tend to bite humans around the ankle.

**Q. Why is it important to prevent this mosquito from establishing itself in the county?**

A. *Aedes aegypti* are capable of transmitting Zika and other viruses, and they are difficult to manage once they are established because of their ability to thrive in urban settings and their eggs’ ability to survive dry conditions.

**SELF-PROTECTION**

**Q. How can I protect myself?**

A. Apply insect repellents containing EPA-registered ingredients such as DEET, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus, always following label instructions. Wear long-sleeve shirts, pants, socks and shoes when spending time outdoors and make sure your window and door screens are in good condition.

**Q. What should I do if I have been bitten around the ankle by a mosquito?**

A. Report any day-biting mosquitoes with black and white stripes on their back and legs by calling the Vector Control District office at (408) 918-4770, emailing [vectorinfo@cep.sccgov.org](mailto:vectorinfo@cep.sccgov.org) or submitting an [online service request](#).

**Q. How can I help?**

A. You can help by:

- Granting us access to your property, allowing us to inspect for the presence of mosquitoes and mosquito breeding sources. If you are concerned about your privacy, we emphasize that our staff who enter private properties are not authorized to do anything besides check for mosquitoes and mosquito breeding sources.
- Request a mosquito inspection. Inspections are provided at no additional costs.
- Looking for small mosquitoes with black and white stripes on their backs and legs.
- Report mosquitoes that bite during the day and at night (even indoors).
- Prevent water from accumulating in containers such as plant pots, saucers, barrels, bins, buckets and old tires.
- Keep pet dishes, bird baths and kiddie pools scrubbed and clean.
- Cover outdoor trash cans, toys and recycle bins and keep items that could hold water out of the rain and away from sprinklers.

- Be sure rain barrels are properly sealed since mosquitoes can lay thousands of eggs inside them.
- Keep rain gutters and drains free of debris.

## **MOSQUITO CONTROL**

### **Q. What is the District doing to control *Aedes aegypti*?**

A. We have a comprehensive surveillance and response plan in place for this mosquito species. To start, we have stepped up our efforts to detect *Aedes aegypti* by deploying traps for adult mosquitoes and conducting door-to-door inspections within a 200-meter area surrounding the sites where the mosquitoes were found.

We are also collaborating with community members and property owners, removing sources of standing water where *Aedes aegypti* can lay eggs.

When applicable, we are using larvicides to kill immature mosquitoes in the area. Larvicides are used to kill mosquito larvae and are often based on naturally occurring materials, such as bacteria found in soils and insect growth hormones.

If needed, we will also use EPA-approved adulticides to kill adult mosquitoes. Adulticides are designed to kill mosquitoes that have reached the biting stage and are deployed only when necessary or when urgent control measures are needed to rapidly disrupt the potential of disease transmission to humans.

All larvicides and adulticides (pesticides) we use are approved by the Federal and State environmental protection agencies.

### **Q. How can I receive updates about *Aedes aegypti*?**

A. Updates will be provided through [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) (@SCCVCD), subscription-based [email notifications](#), on our website at [vector.santaclaracounty.gov](http://vector.santaclaracounty.gov), and through press releases to the media. Direct notifications will also be sent to neighborhoods in the treatment areas through Nextdoor and the County's emergency alert system, [AlertSCC](#).