



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER



PRESS RELEASE

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AEDES AEGYPTI MOSQUITOS FOUND IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

WATSONVILLE –Santa Cruz County Mosquito & Vector Control has detected *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes near East Lake Avenue and Holohan Road in Watsonville.

This is the first detection and Mosquito & Vector Control is working with the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency to evaluate the extent of the infestation and will aggressively target problem areas to prevent its spread. Although these viruses are not currently found in California, *Aedes aegypti* has the potential to transmit dengue, chikungunya, Zika, and yellow fever.

Aedes aegypti is not native to the area; however, it is a common mosquito in some urban areas of the southeastern United States and Arizona. While this is the first local detection in a year, *Aedes aegypti* have been found in Contra Costa, Sacramento, and Merced counties. Unlike native species, *Aedes aegypti* is an aggressive mosquito that will readily bite at any time of the day. They are small (about ¼ inch) in size and black and white.

"Our goal is to control and eliminate this mosquito population," said Amanda Poulsen, Vector Control Manager. "We are doing everything to help ensure this mosquito does not become established in our communities."

Mosquito & Vector Control has expanded surveillance efforts for this type of mosquito and deployed a variety of traps for adult mosquitoes and mosquito eggs surrounding the location where *Aedes aegypti* was found. Additionally, staff are conducting door-to-door inspections of properties for mosquito breeding and standing water at homes near *Aedes aegypti* detections.

The public can play a critical role in helping to control the spread of this mosquito population. *Aedes aegypti* lays its eggs just above the water line in small containers and vessels that hold water, such as dishes under potted plants, bird baths and feeders,



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ornamental fountains, tin cans, children's toys, or discarded tires. It's important for residents to look around their property and dump out even the smallest amount of standing water. Their eggs stick to surfaces they are laid on, so it is important to clean and scrub bird baths and pet watering dishes weekly and dump the water from overflow dishes under potted plants.

Santa Cruz County Mosquito & Vector Control reminds people to do the following to reduce the chances of being bitten by mosquitoes:

- Apply repellents containing EPA registered ingredients such as DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 to exposed skin and/or clothing (as directed on the product label).
- Wear long sleeve shirts, long pants, socks and shoes when mosquitoes are most active.
- Be sure window and door screens are in good repair to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home. Residents experiencing mosquito bites during the day should report them immediately to Santa Cruz County Mosquito & Vector Control online at agdept.com via "Request Service" or (831) 454-2590.

If you are sick with fever, headache, and joint or muscle pain after returning from an area where dengue, chikungunya, or Zika occurs, contact your doctor and stay indoors as much as possible to avoid mosquito bites and help prevent possible spread of the virus.

Additional information on *Aedes aegypti* can be found at:

- Santa Cruz County Mosquito & Vector Control Website: www.agdept.com, under Mosquito Abatement/Vector Control
- California Department of Public Health: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Aedes-aegypti-and-Aedes-albopictusmosquitoes.aspx>