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Riverside County
NEWS RELEASE

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Invasive *Aedes aegypti* mosquito detected near Hemet

The invasive *Aedes aegypti* mosquito has been detected near the outskirts of Hemet, Riverside County vector control officials announced today. A single mosquito was caught in a vector-control trap near Yale Street and Johnston Avenue in the unincorporated area near Hemet on Monday (8/15). The mosquito has been found in several locations in Riverside County in the past year.

Non-native to California, *Aedes aegypti* is a black-and-white, day-biting mosquito that prefers to feed on humans. It has the potential to spread the Zika virus, Chikungunya, yellow fever and dengue. While these viruses are not currently transmitted in California, there is a potential for them to be introduced into the state through infected international travelers. In the presence of a large population of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, a traveler who is a carrier and is bitten in California could become a source for transmitting a disease locally.

Locations where the mosquito has been detected statewide are listed on a California Department of Public Health map at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Documents/AedesDistributionMap.pdf>

Aedes aegypti is different from native California mosquitoes. It lays its eggs just above the water surface in small containers, such as flower pots, pet bowls, discarded tires and bird baths. Capable of breeding in as little as a bottle cap of water, the eggs can survive on surfaces even after water has been drained. As a result, residents should drain all standing water on their property and then scrub items that contained water.

Riverside County's vector control staff will continue looking for the mosquito in areas surrounding the point of discovery. That effort will include door-to-door inspection of residential and commercial properties for mosquitos and standing water where larvae can develop. Postcards also will be mailed to notify residents and to educate them about preventing all mosquitos from breeding around their homes.

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

- Protect against mosquito bites by using insect repellent. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months, and only in concentrations of 30 percent or less on older children. Lemon eucalyptus oil should not be used on children under age three.
- Be aware of peak mosquito hours. Dawn and dusk are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities planned for those hours.
- Choose clothes that can help reduce mosquito bites. Wear long sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors to help keep mosquitos away from skin.
- Mosquito-proof your home by draining standing water and scrubbing items that held water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty and scrub unused flowerpots and wading pools. Change water in birdbaths and pet bowls at least weekly.
- Keep mosquitos outside with tight-fitting screens on all windows and doors.

Contact the Riverside County Vector Control program at (951) 766-9454 or your local vector-control district to report mosquito problems, request fish that eat mosquito larvae or report neglected pools or standing water as potential mosquito sources. Visit the department online <http://www.rivcoeh.org/Programs/vector> or Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/RiversideCountyEH/> for more information.