



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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ISLAND RESIDENTS ASKED TO HELP CONTROL MOSQUITOES

HILO – With the rainy season here, the Hawai'i State Department of Health is asking all residents to help reduce the breeding of mosquitoes by taking simple steps to empty standing water in containers. Besides being unpleasant nuisances, mosquitoes have the potential to transmit diseases to people, pets, or other animals.

Hawai'i is fortunate not to have West Nile Virus or Dengue Fever, serious illnesses carried by mosquitoes and transmitted by their bite. Low mosquito population levels may help prevent the establishment of these and other diseases endemic in mainland states and some pacific island nations.

"The DOH monitors, tests, and works to reduce breeding of mosquitoes and we are asking all Hawai'i residents to help in protecting the health of our islands," said Newton Inouye, acting district environmental program chief of the Hawai'i District Health Office.

"We could really use the public's assistance in controlling mosquitoes at cemeteries, where vases and floral arrangements holding water are ideal for container breeding mosquitoes," added Inouye.

People can help by changing vase water weekly and by turning over vases when not in use. For those who visit gravesites less frequently, a preferable alternative to standing water in vases is the use of floral foam or reusable nontoxic polymer "water gels" or "hydro gels" available from craft or garden shops. Water within the polymer gel remains available to the flowers but prevents mosquito breeding.

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To reduce mosquitoes around the home, routinely check areas for objects holding water. When possible, containers should be dumped out and turned over to permanently control breeding. Clogged roof gutters, bottles, cans, uncapped hollow tile walls or metal fence pipes, saucers beneath plants and hollowed stumps are examples of often overlooked breeding areas. Adding two to four drops of dish detergent to hollow stumps and other immovable objects which hold small volumes of water alters the surface tension of the water drowning immature mosquitoes. This method needs to be repeated frequently. Garden shops can be consulted for products applicable to larger water volumes or that provide long-term control.

Questions or comments are welcome and can be directed to the Vector Control Branch Office in Hilo at 974-4238.

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