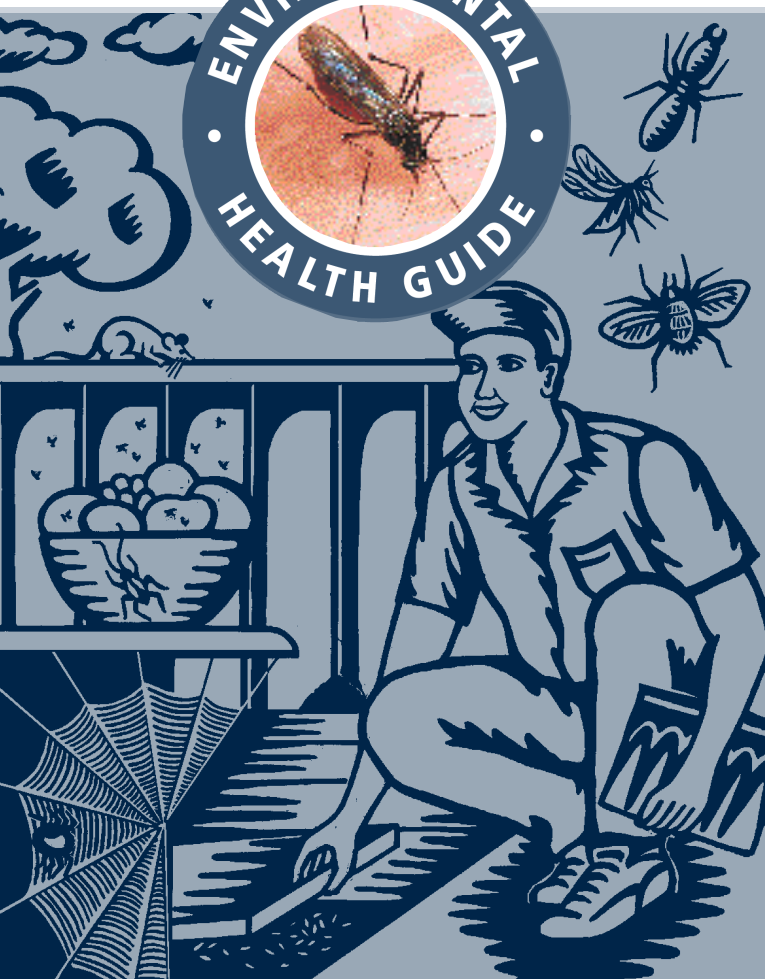


# Mosquitoes in Your Backyard



## Mosquitoes in Your Backyard



## Facts about mosquitoes

There are almost 100 species of mosquitoes in Western Australia and many of them can be serious pests, interfering with leisure time and

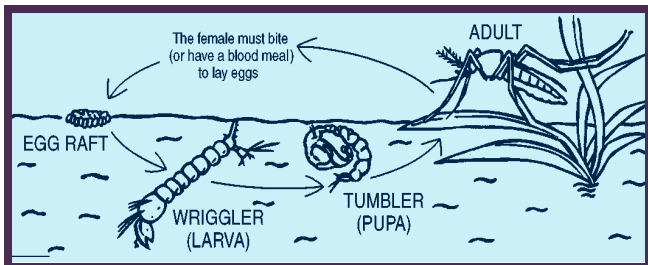
outdoor activities. Mosquito bites cause discomfort and pain, particularly to babies and others with sensitive skin.

Only female mosquitoes bite. They need blood to be able to develop their eggs. While taking blood, infected mosquitoes can pass on disease-causing viruses and parasites. Exposure to large numbers of mosquitoes may increase the chance of being infected with a mosquito-borne disease.

Mosquitoes breed in **STANDING WATER** - such as may occur in old car tyres and other water-holding containers, pot plant drip trays, septic and water tanks, roof gutters, domestic ponds, etc. By eliminating these breeding sites you can help to permanently reduce mosquito numbers in your backyard.

During summer the life cycle from egg to flying adult mosquito takes 7-10 days. In colder months the life cycle may take several weeks.

## Mosquito life cycle



## You can help eliminate breeding areas in your backyard



Dispose of all containers which hold water.



Keep ornamental ponds stocked with mosquito-eating fish, e.g. goldfish. Keep margins free of vegetation.



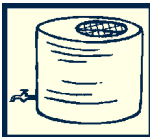
Keep swimming pools well chlorinated and filtered and free of dead leaves.



Fill or drain depressions in the ground that hold water.



Vent pipes on septic tank systems must be fitted with mosquito proof cowls. Seal all gaps in lid and ensure leach drains are completely covered.



Screen rainwater tanks and/or add paraffin oil to cover surface. Ensure guttering does not hold water.



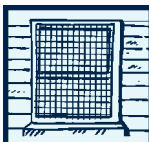
Empty pot plant drip trays once a week or fill with sand. Empty and clean animal and pet drinking water once a week.



Some pot plants (especially bromeliads) hold water in their leaf axils. These should be emptied of water once a week.

**Residual pyrethroid sprays**, e.g. deltamethrin, permethrin, can be used to further reduce nuisance mosquitoes. However this should not replace the prevention of backyard breeding which is much more effective.

## Avoid being bitten



### HOUSES

Screen all doors and windows.  
All doors should be self-closing and open outwards.



### CAMPING

- Screen tents
- Use repellents containing \*DEET
- Wear protective clothing



### OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Take protective measures when mosquitoes are most prevalent.



### LOCATIONS

Recognise and avoid areas of mosquito activity, e.g. swamps, salt marshes, billabongs.

\*Diethyl toluamide. Effective repellents contain 5% to 20% (50-200g/litre) DEET.

## Disease

Worldwide, mosquito-borne viruses and parasites are major causes of human and animal sickness and death. In WA the main mosquito-borne diseases of concern are:

### 1. Ross River virus

Infected people may develop a disease called Epidemic Polyarthrits, commonly known as Ross River virus infection. Symptoms may continue for several months or even years in unlucky individuals. In epidemic years there may be hundreds of people affected in WA.

### 2. Barmah Forest virus

This virus appears to be a relatively recent introduction to WA and causes a disease with very similar symptoms to Ross River virus infection.

### **3. Australian encephalitis**

This is a rare but serious disease occurring in the northern half of WA. In severe cases, brain damage, paralysis or death may result.

### **4. Dog heartworm**

This disease of dogs is caused by a parasitic worm, which in large numbers can clog the heart and seriously affect the blood flow.

Two other diseases, malaria and dengue fever, have previously occurred in WA and could be reintroduced given the right conditions. In the case of malaria, travellers should protect themselves from mosquitoes while overseas and take malaria tablets. The mosquito which carries dengue virus is no longer in WA, and is less likely to be reintroduced with the elimination of backyard breeding areas.

## **Mosquito control**

### **What are local and state governments doing?**

The Health Department of WA, in collaboration with local government, conducts mosquito control programs in areas where mosquitoes are suspected of carrying disease. However, despite these programs, Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus will always be a threat because they occur in natural cycles between mosquitoes and animals, and it is simply not possible to eliminate all mosquitoes. Therefore it is important for people to take personal measures to reduce the risk of contracting disease and to reduce the breeding of nuisance mosquitoes.

**Front cover:** An engorged *Aedes notoscriptus* mosquito. This species is common statewide, breeding in artificial containers in backyards.

## Other leaflets available

Ross River Virus and Barmah Forest Virus in WA  
Australian Encephalitis

Facts on Rats

Fleas

Fly Control

Stable Fly

Termite Prevention for Your Home

## Further information

For further information concerning mosquitoes and their control, please call your local government Environmental Health Officer

or

Mosquito-borne Disease Control,  
Environmental Health Service

PO Box 8172, Stirling St

PERTH WA 6849

Telephone: (09) 385 6001

Facsimile: (09) 383 1819

<http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au>



CREATING A HEALTHIER STATE FOR EVERYBODY.