

A PLANNED PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

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It is becoming quite evident that California can no longer rely on insecticides as the primary tool for mosquito control. Mosquito resistance to readily available agricultural-type insecticides in California's Central Valley, and the higher cost of materials specifically developed for mosquito control may result in permanent modification of the approach to mosquito control. All means of controlling mosquitoes must be utilized including mosquito prevention.

A recent survey of mosquito control agencies in California shows that a majority plans to emphasize mosquito prevention and that public information will be tied into the program. Many agencies feel that water management offers the greatest potential for effectively and rapidly reducing mosquito production, with the classic approaches of land leveling, filling and draining being a long-term approach.

The public will be brought closer to the whole program and will be increasingly involved.

On April 1, 1971, the Turlock Mosquito Abatement District joined with four other Districts to develop a public information program. The program is planned to inform the general public of necessary modifications in the use of water for irrigated agriculture, industry, and around the home to prevent or reduce mosquito production and to reinforce personal contacts by District personnel with known mosquito producers.

A public relations consultant was contracted for one year to develop a program and supply the Districts with radio announcements, news releases, posters and advice.

A basic public information outline was prepared to serve as a guide for selecting monthly subjects or topics. The main headings are:

I. Stating the problem;

II. Background information on mosquitoes;

III. General education on mosquitoes;

IV. Solutions—mosquito prevention;

V. Role of the Districts and the community.

The basic outline has been expanded to approximately 150 subheadings.

The four District managers contacted newspaper reporters and editors, radio broadcasters, editors of weekly and monthly magazines, TV stations, schools, librarians and utility service people to explain our public information program and enlist their help. All four Districts were quite successful in getting the support of the news media and cooperation from libraries, schools and utility agencies.

When the contract with the public relations consultant expired in March, 1972, we felt we had gained sufficient experience and had developed the program to the point where we could carry on without the services of a professional.

The four original Districts plus four more joined together and formed the San Joaquin Valley Public Information Committee. An organizational meeting was held at Turlock Mosquito Abatement District office, April 11, 1972. We adopted a budget, hired a cartoonist and copy writer and went on about the business of continuing our public information program.

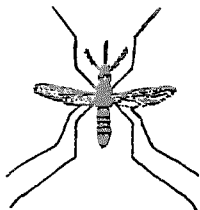
The committee meets on the first Thursday of each month at the Turlock Mosquito Abatement District office. We select two topics for each month to be used as the theme for radio spots, news articles, bookmarks and mail stuffers. Topics are selected two months in advance. This schedule allows time for the staff to prepare material and for review by the Committee before the material is distributed.

BOOK MARK

The Morning After

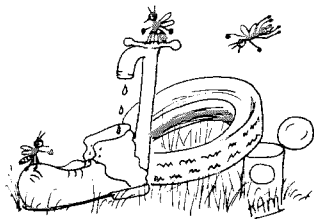


It's the morning after the winter before, and Mrs. Mosquito is coming out of hibernation. All it takes is a warm day to bring her around for this year's mosquito season to begin. Mosquito control is possible, but it has to be a community effort—do your part to eradicate mosquito producing water sources.



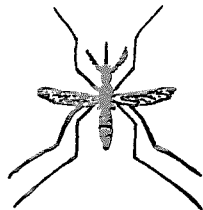
YOUR LOCAL MOSQUITO
ABATEMENT DISTRICT

TRASHY BACKYARD



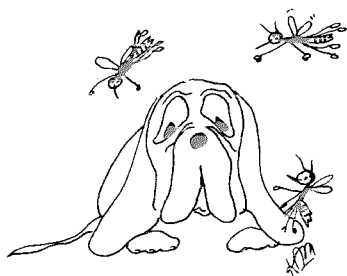
That "neat junk" scattered around your backyard is not only unsightly; it may also create a cozy breeding place for mosquitoes.

Don't add to the mosquito problem—clean up the tin cans and old tires that can hold water, and you'll also be cleaning out a lot of unwelcome mosquito visitors.



YOUR LOCAL MOSQUITO
ABATEMENT DISTRICT

BOOK MARK



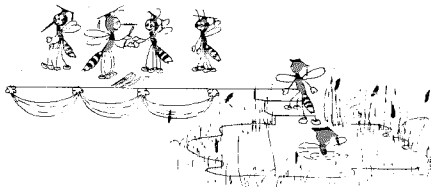
LOVE YOUR PUPPY

Love your puppy—mosquitoes aren't just a nuisance to people—they also carry a disabling disease that affects dogs. It's called heartworm, and the only available prevention is to control mosquitoes. So, if you love your puppy, clean up the mosquito producing sources around your property. It can mean a longer, healthier life for your pet.

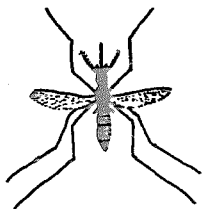
BOOK MARK

If you're over-irrigating or have fields that aren't drained properly, you probably are sending hordes of mosquitoes on their way into the world.

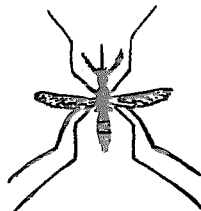
CLASS OF



Don't let water stand on your property more than 3½ days. Call your local mosquito abatement district for more information.



YOUR LOCAL MOSQUITO ABATEMENT DISTRICT



YOUR LOCAL MOSQUITO ABATEMENT DISTRICT

All routine material is sent to member agencies one month in advance of its intended release.

The cost to each member district is \$120 per year for development of written material and cartoons. This includes 12 bookmark captions, 96 15-second radio spots, 24 news releases, 6 stuffer captions, and 24 cartoons suitable for bookmarks, stuffers or newspaper stories. Cartoons are provided as PMT prints suitable for reproduction. Each month member agencies also receive copies of all newspaper articles relating to mosquitoes published in California.

When the program was first launched, member Districts also disseminated general information to the public by placing displays in public buildings. Large posters were made and pamphlets were prepared and displayed on attractive racks in local banks, utility offices, real estate offices and at special events such as county fairs. Considerable time was required to locate and maintain suitable display spots for our material, and public acceptance appeared limited.

This past season we have concentrated on materials for radio, daily or weekly newspapers, bookmarks, and stuffers. This has proven to be the most economical means of disseminating information. Radio stations air our 15 second spots four times a day, free of charge, as a public service. Newspapers occasionally print our news releases as presented or will often call for a special article by their staff reporters. Many local utilities will include our stuffer or bookmark in their monthly statement at no cost to the District. Most libraries will hand out bookmarks supplied by the Districts, and this has been a very popular method of reaching the public. Most librarians feel that bookmarks extend the life of books.

With our present staff, we could extend

our public information effort to local schools, weekly shopping news, trade magazines, outdoor advertising, television, and posters if and when an expanded program becomes necessary.

Participating Districts feel the program is producing positive results. Districts are reporting a greater public awareness as evidenced by the increased number of phone calls to the District. Many calls are to inform the District of suspected mosquito sources. The phone calls provide an opportunity to inform more people of the District's control program. While this activity is time-consuming, it does produce desirable results. We also note that cities, irrigation districts, planning commissions and other public agencies willingly cooperate with mosquito abatement districts in their public information effort and are more aware of their own responsibility in comprehensive mosquito control.

A turning point in public acceptance was converting our program from a strictly factual presentation to include humor in the form of cartoons. Our experience in this program has taught us the general public more readily accepts factual information when it is presented in an entertaining manner. However, we are careful to balance the humor with enough fact to be informative and educational.

The San Joaquin Valley Public Information Committee now has 15 participating mosquito abatement districts throughout California. We employ one cartoonist/copy writer and have the staff and facilities to provide public information services to additional mosquito control agencies. We welcome new members in what we feel is an exciting and fruitful program and certainly a positive endeavor toward community participation and the prevention of mosquitoes.