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Residents urged to help control mosquito numbers

The mosquito season has started and residents need to be on the lookout for 'backyard breeders' that spread dangerous diseases such as Ross River virus.

The City of Albany's Environmental Health team warns that even though it is working to bait mosquito-prone areas, small breeding areas emerge in backyards and on vacant or neglected blocks.

Mosquitoes breed quickly during the summer months in stagnant water pools including in bird baths, old car tyres, open containers, pot plant drip trays, septic and water tanks, roof gutters and domestic ponds.

Residents and landowners are asked to keep an eye out for these hazards and empty them regularly to break the mosquito breeding cycle which during colder months can take several weeks from egg to flying adult mosquito, but just 7 to 10 days in the current warmer weather.

This year the City of Albany is supporting the "Fight the Bite" campaign which encourages individuals to protect themselves and their families from mosquitoes in three ways – covering up, using repellent and cleaning up areas around the home where mosquitoes can breed.

The campaign is targeted at all West Australians in an effort to educate them of the risks associated with mosquito-borne disease and how they can support the work of local government mosquito control programs.

In February, the City of Albany is also hosting the WA Department of Health's Mosquito Management Course. The course is mainly for Environmental Health Officers and covers areas such as mosquito biology, disease transmission and control approaches.

City of Albany Coordinator of Environmental Health Scott Reitsema said a useful tip to prevent mosquitoes breeding in rainwater tanks is to add a teaspoon of paraffin oil to form a slick on top of the water. He said by eliminating or preventing breeding areas with simple measures such as paraffin oil, the community could permanently reduce mosquito numbers in backyards.

"With help from the community we can avoid the spread of diseases such as Ross River and Barmah Forest virus, and the heartworm threat to pet dogs," Mr Reitsema said.

"Important personal safety measures such as screening your house, using insect repellents, covering up with protective clothing and taking care during outdoor activities when mosquitoes are buzzing around can be taken to avoid being bitten."



Remember to check the maker's instructions before applying repellent sprays or lotions to young children.

For more information on mosquito control, visit www.albany.wa.gov.au and enter "mosquitoes" in the search box to download a pdf of "Mosquitoes in Your Backyard".

To report mosquitoes breeding in a nearby vacant or neglected block, or seek more information on control programs, contact the City of Albany Environmental Health team on 9841 9333.

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