

**OFFICIAL NOTICE
and
BALLOT INFORMATION GUIDE**

**Mail-In Assessment Ballot
FOR THE**

PROPOSED

**Mosquito, Fire Ant &
Disease Control Assessment**

**ORANGE COUNTY VECTOR
CONTROL DISTRICT**

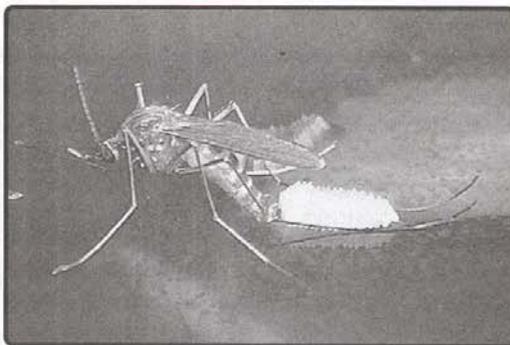


Why Did You Receive This Ballot?

The Orange County Vector Control District is an independent agency (not part of the County or any city) that currently controls mosquitoes, flies and rats throughout Orange County. The District also protects the public health by regularly testing for and working to prevent diseases that are spread by mosquitoes, other insects and rodents.

The District previously provided services to control Red Imported Fire Ants. These services were funded by a special State grant in the amount of approximately \$3.25 per parcel. Due to the State budget crisis, this State grant was cancelled and the District's fire ant control services were halted as a result.

This assessment ballot allows property owners to decide if they should pay an assessment to create a local funding source to resume Red Imported Fire Ant control services throughout the County and to enhance funding for mosquito control and disease prevention services. Additional funding would also allow the District to more actively test for and respond to new diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, such as West Nile virus.



Female mosquito laying eggs in standing water

Summary Of Proposed Services:

Red Imported Fire Ant- Resume year-round Red Imported Fire Ant control, through a county-wide program to find, treat and eventually eradicate fire ants in Orange County.

Mosquitoes - Year-round control of mosquitoes, at source locations using environmentally safe methods. Inspection and control of mosquitoes in residential, commercial, and agricultural areas. Free mosquito fish for backyard fishponds and other standing water.

West Nile Virus Disease Program - The first indication of West Nile virus in Orange County was found in wild birds in the City of Fullerton on March 31, 2004. This measure would fund expanded mosquito abatement and WNV surveillance, including increased virus testing of mosquitoes, and increased submission of dead birds and blood samples to the State for analysis.

Disease Surveillance - Year-round monitoring of mosquitoes, ticks, and rodents and the diseases they can transmit such as encephalitis, dog heartworm, malaria, plague, hantavirus, and lyme disease.

Community Education - Regularly inform the public about how to protect themselves and their pets from diseases carried by insects and rodents. Upon request, provide presentations, news releases, materials and workshops for schools and civic groups.

Emerging Disease Surveillance - Monitoring for new and emerging public health threats such as the Asian Tiger Mosquito and others.

Rapid Response Service Request - Service technicians arrive and address owner's problems, typically within one business day of receiving a service request.

How Does the District Control Mosquitoes?

The District reduces mosquito populations by identifying all major sources of mosquitoes and then implementing environmentally safe measures to eliminate mosquito larvae before they hatch. By focusing on mosquito breeding locations, the District is able to effectively control mosquitoes before they hatch and begin biting people and animals.

One of the most common control measures is the use of mosquitofish to eat the mosquito larvae and pupae. For standing water, the District uses environmentally safe methods, such as natural bacteria and a mosquito hormone, that target the mosquito larvae but are harmless to people, other animals, and plants. The District also makes service calls, upon property owner request, to treat residential mosquito sources such as buckets, ponds, troughs, fountains, gutters, stagnant pools, etc., and to provide mosquito fish.

Will This Affect the Environment?

The District's abatement and disease control efforts involve the use of environmentally safe approaches. Instead of spraying for adult mosquitoes, the District focuses on controlling mosquito larvae at their breeding locations. This mosquito control approach has been found to be environmentally sound and is endorsed by the Environmental Protection Agency, the University of California, Centers for Disease Control, and others.



***Trapping mosquitoes
that will be tested for diseases***

What About Red Imported Fire Ants?

The Red Imported Fire Ant is the most recent of an increasing number of new pests that have been introduced into Orange County. A native of South America, this fire ant arrived in the southeastern United States in the 1930s and eventually found its way to California and ultimately into Orange County.

Fire ants form colonies near homes and other buildings. They sometimes forage indoors for food and moisture, particularly during the hot, dry summer months. Entire colonies occasionally nest in wall voids or rafters, sometimes moving into buildings during floods. Fire ants are very difficult to eliminate once they have established a colony in an area because each colony can support up to 50 egg-laying queens and each queen can produce over 500 new ants per day. Newly mated queens then fly to surrounding areas to start new colonies.

The greatest threat posed by fire ants is their rapid swarming behavior and painful, venomous sting. The sting causes a burning sensation that is followed by a raised pustule a few days later. The pustule can last for up to two weeks. The venom from fire ants is relatively toxic, and potentially lethal to pets, wildlife and sensitized humans.



To fund a year-round fire ant control program

What Are the Economic Costs of Fire Ants?

Fire ants damage landscaping, agriculture and also frequently infest electrical equipment. They can chew on insulation and either cause short circuits or interfere with switching mechanisms. Fire ants also attack and destroy animals and wildlife. In the Southeast, for example, fire ants have invaded and spread over large areas. In some areas there are now 300 to 1000 ant-mounds per acre. In urban areas of Texas, the current cost to control fire ants and repair their damage is estimated to exceed \$150 per household per year.

Also, the commercial nursery industry in Orange County is currently spending in excess of \$3 million annually to treat for Red Imported Fire Ants. Treatment is required under federal law since Orange County is under federal quarantine ordered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



Pustules form after a stinging bite from a Red Imported Fire Ant

What Are the District's Fire Ant Goals?

If the proposed assessment is approved, the District would resume year-round fire ant control services. The District's goal is to provide an intensive, coordinated county-wide program to find, treat and ultimately eradicate the Red Imported Fire Ant from Orange County.

West Nile Virus Information

West Nile virus is a disease spread by mosquitoes that have bitten infected birds. Originally from Africa, the virus first appeared in the United States in 1999 (in New York City). Since then, the virus has spread throughout much of North America and has now arrived in California. The virus can infect people and horses. About 15% of infected people develop mild to moderate illness and in some cases life-threatening encephalitis.

Since the virus spreads rapidly and California has already registered four positive human cases, (www.cdc.gov), the District is proposing this funding measure to better prepare for this public health threat. Year-round mosquito monitoring and control programs are currently the most effective way to reduce the risk of a West Nile virus outbreak.

West Nile Virus Infections and Deaths by Year, in USA

Year	Number of States	Human Case Count	Human Deaths	Bird Deaths	Horse Deaths
1999	4	62	7	N/A	25
2000	11	83	9	4,305	63
2001	27	149	18	7,332	731
2002	40	4,156	284	100,000+	14,000+
2003	46	9,858	262	TBD	4,400+

Source: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

West Nile Virus In Orange County

The first case of West Nile virus in Orange County was discovered on March 31, 2004, when two wild birds in the Fullerton area tested positive for the virus. Funds from the measure will be used to control mosquitoes that can transmit West Nile Virus and to regularly test for this and other viruses.

Additional resources related to West Nile Virus:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm> <http://westnile.ca.gov>

<http://www.mvcac.org/WNV.htm>



To fund year-round testing programs for diseases such as encephalitis and West Nile virus

How Does the District Test for Diseases?

The District uses several disease surveillance approaches. Because diseases like West Nile virus often appear first in wild birds, the District traps wild birds near mosquito breeding locations in its current service area. The wild birds are humanely and regularly tested for diseases and viruses.

Another disease surveillance approach is the use of mosquito and insect traps. Insects collected are brought to the District's vector control laboratory for identification, and specimens are prepared for transport to a State laboratory for disease testing. The District also will periodically trap wild rodents to test for plague and other diseases. If diseases are discovered, the District will work with the State Department of Health Services to implement an appropriate response plan.

Additional Information

For additional information concerning the proposed services or this ballot proceeding, please call the Orange County Vector Control District at (714) 971-2421 or visit www.ocvcd.org.

About the Orange County Vector Control District

The Orange County Vector Control District is a special purpose district, not related to the County or any city, with the specific mission of protecting public health by controlling rats, flies, mosquitoes, and other vector related problems in Orange County. The District, which was formed in 1947, is overseen by a Board of Trustees comprised of 35 members, each appointed by their city of residence and one representing the unincorporated County areas.

The District's services to control Red Imported fire ants had been funded by a special State grant in the amount of \$3.25 per parcel. Due to the State budget crisis, this State grant was recently cancelled and the District's fire ant control services were stopped as a result. All efforts to get the State to continue this grant have been unsuccessful.

Due to the District's restricted level of funding and the loss of the State fire ant grant, the District is proposing this local funding measure. If approved, this assessment would allow the District to restart its Red Imported Fire Ant control services, continue controlling disease carrying insects and rodents and better prepare for and respond to new diseases carried by insects and rodents.

For more information about the District and its services, please visit the District's website at www.ocvcd.org.

What Are the Public Accountability Safeguards?

This ballot measure will include several layers of fiscal safeguards to ensure that all funds are expended appropriately. First, assessment funds can only be spent on mosquito, fire ant, other vector, and disease control services in Orange County. Second, only the Board of Trustees can authorize an expenditure of the money. Third, annual audits will be conducted to ensure that all funds are expended appropriately. And fourth, the budget for the services proposed for each year will be presented to the public annually.

How Much Is This Assessment?

The proposed assessment for your property for fiscal year 2004-05 is printed on the Official Assessment Ballot included with this notice and information item. For single family homes it is \$5.42 per year, for most commercial properties it is \$2.71 per 1/5th acre, and other property types are assessed according to their use. The total amount that would be raised by the proposed assessments for fiscal year 2004-05 is approximately \$4,300,000. If approved, this proposed assessment would be in addition to the District assessment that is currently on your property tax bills.

How Was the Assessment Determined?

The total cost of the mosquito and disease control services to be funded by the assessments is allocated to each property based on the estimated special benefit received. The method of benefit allocation is based on the relative special benefit in relation to the property's use. The types of special benefit include: increased public safety, welfare and protection of health; enhanced quality of life; desirability of the area and utility of property; increased disease prevention awareness; increased economic activities and reduced cost; protection of tourism and business activities; and the reduced risk of nuisance and liability. An engineer's report describing the proposed services, benefits, method of assessment, budgets and proposed assessments for each parcel is available for review at the Orange County Vector Control District offices located at 13001 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove, CA 92702.

Method of Voting

To count, your official ballot must be **signed, marked "YES" or "NO" and received before the end of the public input portion of the public hearing on Thursday, July 22, 2004.** Only official ballots which are returned, signed, and marked with the property owner's support or opposition are counted. If you lose your ballot, require a replacement ballot, or want to change your vote, please call (714) 971-2421 for another ballot. Ballots are weighted by the proposed amount of assessment and will be tabulated accordingly by Haynie & Company, CPAs, an independent accounting and auditing firm. The District shall not impose the assessment if there is a majority protest. A majority protest exists if, upon the conclusion of the public hearing, weighted ballots submitted in opposition to the assessment exceed the weighted ballots submitted in favor of the assessment. If a majority of weighted ballots returned are in support, the assessment may be levied for fiscal year 2004-05 and may be continued in future years.

Public Hearing

A public hearing will be held on Thursday, July 22, 2004 at 3:00 p.m. at the City of Huntington Beach City Council Chambers, located at 2000 Main St., Huntington Beach, CA 92648. You are invited to attend the public hearing. Tabulation of the returned ballots will commence after the close of the public input portion of the hearing and the results of the tabulation are expected to be announced at the continuation of the public hearing scheduled for August 5, 2004 at 3:00 p.m., at the Orange County Vector Control District Board Chambers located at 13001 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove, CA 92843-2102.

Will This Assessment Increase in Future Years?

The assessment cannot be increased in future years without approval from property owners in another assessment ballot proceeding, except for an annual adjustment tied to the change in the Los Angeles Area Consumer Price Index (CPI), not to exceed 3% per year.

Mosquito facts

Disease Spread: Mosquitoes infected with a disease can spread that disease to other humans or animals when they bite and suck blood.

Why Do Mosquito Bites Itch? When a mosquito bites, it injects chemicals to prevent the blood from clotting. These chemicals cause irritation that makes people itch.

Do All Suck Blood? Only the female mosquitoes feed on blood; male mosquitoes feed on plant nectar and juices.

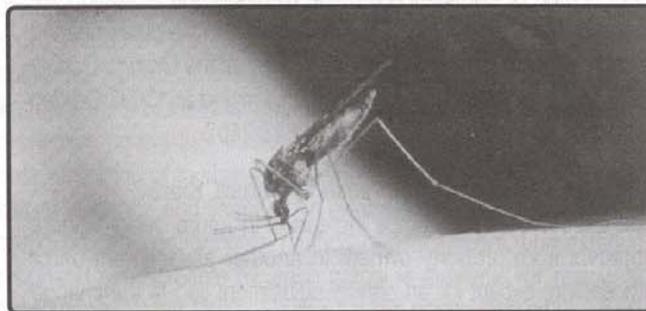
Breeding: Mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water. These eggs turn into larvae that live in the water until they hatch into adult mosquitoes. By eliminating standing water, we can eliminate the sources of mosquitoes in many cases.

How Many From a Bucket? A small household bucket filled with water can produce over 500 mosquitoes per day.

Lifespan: About 30 days for females; 10 days for males.

Eggs: One female can lay as many as 400 eggs in its lifetime.

Wing Speed: Moves more than 1,000 times a second; that is the buzzing sound we hear.



When mosquitoes bite humans or animals, they can transmit diseases and viruses