

Basic Mosquito Control-A Primer

The control of mosquitoes is considerably more complex than simply driving a fog truck around town, rather, mosquito abatement is a multi tiered effort using several different strategies. These approaches, often referred to as Integrated Pest Management (IPM in the business), consist of habitat alteration, larval control, and adult spraying. When these methods are used concurrently, mosquito populations can be reduced more efficiently than if only one technique is solely relied upon.

Habitat alteration is one of the oldest and most effective means of suppression of nuisance mosquitoes. Basically, the approach is to make a habitat that is producing mosquitoes unsuitable for mosquito breeding. For example, if a wetland is a source of mosquitoes, simply fill it in and it will no longer produce mosquitoes. With more environmental awareness today, such draconian measures are no longer suitable, but the concept still remains viable. The most widely employed habitat alteration technique used by this district is the salt marsh management program ([LINK to Salt Marsh Management](#)). This method makes large areas of salt marshes and mangrove swamps unsuitable for mosquito egg deposition, thus reducing salt marsh mosquito production. Habitat alteration can also be done on a much smaller scale. Simple acts such as emptying water filled containers or rain gutters around the home eliminate domestic mosquito production. Improving drainage in neighborhoods can eliminate the production of mosquitoes in swales and other low-lying areas.

Control of larval mosquitoes is a very attractive option because the mosquitoes can be eliminated before they disperse. District inspectors ([Link to Inspection Program](#)) spend a large amount of time checking and treating areas that are producing larvae. These treatments lessen the need to return and spray for adult mosquitoes. ([LINK to Control of larval Mosquitoes](#)) Unfortunately, many mosquito-producing areas are either too extensive or inaccessible for effective larval control, making it necessary to control mosquitoes after they emerge as adults.

The control of adult mosquitoes is either done from a truck ([LINK to ULV fog Program](#)) or an airplane. This district primarily uses ULV trucks for spraying, only resorting to aerial techniques in periods of disease outbreaks. Ground spraying is reasonably effective in urban areas where the streets are close enough together to get good spray coverage. In rural areas, where there is a long distance between roads and large acreages not accessible to spray trucks, ground spraying is only moderately effective and will only provide temporary relief.