



# Watershed Protection Program

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## Mosquitoes and Rain Barrels

A properly installed and maintained rain barrel can provide water for irrigation and other non-potable uses. It also helps to reduce runoff discharged into the storm drain. However, if not taken care of, rain barrels can become breeding sites for mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are more than just annoying pests. They can transmit diseases like West Nile virus. Mosquitoes only need ½ inch of standing water to lay their eggs. In hot weather, they can progress from egg to biting adult in less than a week! It is important, therefore, to screen your rain barrel and conduct routine maintenance on your system.

### Follow these Tips to Prevent Mosquito Breeding:

- **Downspout diverters.** If you have a downspout diverter, place screen between the diverter and the rain barrel. Direct the overflow to a landscaped area and away from the foundation of your home. *Note:* Some diverters will automatically re-route the water back into the downspout once the barrel is full.
- **Inspect your rain barrel system.** Regularly inspect for cracks or leaks. Ensure that all fittings and seals are intact. Make sure no water is accumulating on the ground around the barrel.
- **Clean filters.** Routinely clean screens to keep them free of debris.
- **Clean gutters and downspouts.** Remove leaves, twigs, and other organic matter that can block water flow and create a standing pool of water.
- **Clean the barrel.** Drain and clean the system annually.
- **Consider mosquito larvicide.** Time-release tablets or “mosquito dunks” may be used in a rain barrel. These contain bacteria that kill mosquito larvae, but do not harm people, animals, or plants.

For more information on mosquitoes or West Nile virus visit:

- [www.SDFightTheBite.com](http://www.SDFightTheBite.com)  
(858) 694-2888



For additional resources and information on rain barrels, please visit:

- [www.rethinkwateruse.org](http://www.rethinkwateruse.org)

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