



## Controlling mosquitoes in pools, spas, ponds and dams

It is well known mosquitoes can carry diseases including Ross River virus, Barmah Forest virus, Dengue fever and dog heartworm.

While Gladstone Regional Council conducts an extensive mosquito management program on Council land, it is your responsibility as a tenant or property owner to manage your own backyards.

Mosquitoes will breed in stagnant water found in pot plant saucers, plants such as Bromeliads, bird baths, roof gutters, pools and other water retaining containers. These potential breeding sources can be easily managed by simply emptying the water.

### Swimming and spa pools

Neglected or poorly maintained spa pools and swimming pools are an ideal breeding environment. When a pool's chemicals are not maintained correctly and/or the filtration system is not working properly, it becomes a public health risk.

Mosquitoes need stagnant water to breed so pools are a great place for the female to lay her eggs. Once they hatch, the larvae develop into biting adult mosquitoes within four to seven days.

To stop mosquitoes breeding in your pool, minimise algal growth and bacteria build-up, you should:

- Treat it regularly with chemicals;
- Clean thoroughly; and
- Operate the filtration system according to recommendations.

Guidance and information can be obtained from any competent pool maintenance technician and you may also refer to the [Queensland Health Swimming and Spa Pool Water Quality and Operational Guidelines \(October 2004\)](#). Although these guidelines are intended for publicly used pools, they will also provide useful information for private (domestic) users.

### Ponds and dams

Permanent water bodies such as ornamental ponds and dams have the

potential to continually breed mosquitoes if left unchecked. A permanent, environmentally sound solution to this problem is to make sure your backyard pond or dam contains a population of small native fish.

Most small native fish are capable of eating hundreds of mosquito larvae per day. Usually, there is no need to provide any extra food for these fish in your ornamental pond or dam. If you want to feed them, use standard aquarium foods including pellets, flakes and freeze-dried products.

### Building a pond

- Position the pond away from existing large trees to avoid root problems and minimise leaf problems.
- Remember to include plans for drainage, water supply and electricity supply for pumps, lights and filters.
- Allow plenty of shallows around the edges which will allow native plants such as sedges, reeds and ground covers to grow. These plants improve the appearance of the pond, provide shelter for fish and help water quality.
- Cane toads can usually be excluded by designing a 50 centimetre wall around the pond.
- All overflows should be screened to prevent the escape of plants, snails, fish and eggs during heavy rain.
- New ponds should be cleaned before use. Plastic lined ponds can be cleaned with salt and water. Concrete ponds need to be cured by filling, scrubbing and painting with vinegar, followed by several water changes.
- If filling with tap water, allow the water to sit until the chlorine dissipates, or use a commercial chlorine neutraliser.
- Before adding plants and fish, make sure all equipment such as filters, fountains and waterfalls are working.
- Grow in-pond plants in containers, as this will make them easier to remove during routine maintenance.

- Allow at least a week for plants to settle before adding fish.
- When introducing fish, float the bags or containers of fish in the pond to equalise the water temperature. Before releasing the fish, add frequent small amounts of pond water to adjust them to other pond water parameters.
- Do not feed your fish initially for two days. Then only feed them once a day with enough food as they can consume in five to 10 minutes.

### Legal Obligations

Section 11 of the *Public Health Act 2005* refers to a public health risk as any animal, structure, substance or other thing that is, or is likely to become, a breeding ground or source of food for designated pests.

Designated Pests include mosquitoes. The *Public Health Regulation 2005* requires that a person must ensure an accumulation of water or liquid at the place is not a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Fines may apply to residents found to be breeding mosquitoes or failing to comply with directions to remove the public health risk.

### More information

For further information about this or any other mosquito issue, please call Council's Customer Service Centre on 07 4970 0700. Alternatively, a range of Fact Sheets along with information regarding other Environmental Health issues can be accessed by visiting the Gladstone Regional Council website [www.gladstone.qld.gov.au](http://www.gladstone.qld.gov.au)

### How can you contact us?



(07) 4970 0700

STD CALLS: 1300 733 343

For those residents who currently incur STD call rates when contacting their local customer service centre



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