Day-biting mosquitoes that can spread deadly dengue and yellow fever diseases [viruses] have been found for the 1st time in southeast Fresno. The Fresno Mosquito & Vector Control District stepped up trapping this month when the _Aedes aegypti_ mosquito was found in Exeter in Tulare County and Arvin in Kern County, said Tim Phillips, district manager.

District workers placed 120 traps in the city. One of the traps, on Clovis Avenue between Belmont and Tulare avenues, contained immature mosquitoes, Phillips said. "We didn't need a microscope to see them," he said. "There were about 30."

Testing showed they were the _A. aegypti_, a potential carrier of dengue, yellow fever, and chikungunya fever -- tropical diseases with symptoms that include fever, severe headaches, and body aches. In extreme cases, the diseases can lead to death.

The mosquitoes in Fresno were found about 3 miles [4.8 km] from locations in Clovis where they were found initially last year [2013] and continue to spread this year. Madera was the first to detect the mosquitoes last year and continues to trap mosquitoes this year.

Typically, the mosquito likes hot, humid tropical areas, like the southeastern US, Mexico, and Central and South America. Yale researchers said last month [August 2014] they believe the mosquitoes found in the Valley probably hopped rides on planes or trains to get to California from the Southeast.

So far, there have been no cases of the _A. aegypti_ mosquito carrying diseases reported in the San Joaquin Valley.

But people traveling outside the US to infected areas can be bitten, become infected and return to the States. Mosquitoes here can bite an infected human, become infected and spread the disease. In 2013, there were 124 imported cases of dengue fever reported in California, according to the Yale researchers.

Spraying for the mosquito has not been as successful as hoped, Phillips said, and the public's help is needed to eliminate sources of standing water in yards that can be breeding grounds. "We don't want this mosquito," Phillips said, "but I don't know if we're going to stop it."

The Consolidated Mosquito Abatement District is trying to determine the extent of the _A. aegypti_ infestation in Clovis. Workers know it is spreading, and they are looking for sources of breeding, which could include everything from drainage pipes to flower pots. "Anything that can hold water is a potential source for the mosquitoes," said Steve Mulligan, district manager.

"In the past, we always said protect yourself when you are outside between dusk till dawn," he said. "Now we have to say the key is when you are out and you notice mosquitoes, use repellent whether it's at day or night."
Taking precautions
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To prevent exposure to mosquito bites:
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 according to label instructions. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older.

- Wear protective clothing and repellent if outside at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.

- Eliminate or drain all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can lay eggs. Report neglected swimming pools to mosquito and vector control agencies.

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[Interestingly, _A. aegypti_ had been found by the San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District at Holy Cross cemetery in a residential area of the city of Menlo Park last year (2013) and earlier that year in Fresno and Madera counties. The report above provides information about 2 new locations for this species in Tulare and Kern counties. Yet another invasive mosquito, _Aedes notoscriptus_ from Australia was found in southern California (Los Angeles county) in September this year (2014). One hopes that the eradication efforts to eliminate _A. notoscriptus_ and _A. aegypti_ have been successful.

In addition to being a pest species, _A. notoscriptus_ is both a heartworm and a virus vector in Australia. Should either _A. aegypti_ or _A. notoscriptus_ become established, it raises the risk of ongoing, local transmission of several viruses, including dengue and chikungunya.

A map showing the location of the counties in California where these mosquitoes have been detected can be accessed at <http://geology.com/county-map/california-county-map.gif> and a map of California at <http://healthmap.org/promed/p/204>. - Mod.TY]