



**Antelope Valley Mosquito  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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### **“Mosquito Swarms” are Actually Midges**

Lancaster, CA – In the past couple of weeks the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) has been getting several calls per day from residents of the Antelope Valley complaining about “swarms of mosquitoes” that are covering their cars, walls, screen doors and windows.

“The mosquito species that we mostly have in the Antelope Valley do not create swarms or clouds like the callers have been describing,” said District Entomologist Karen Mellor. “When you see a big cloud of small flying insects they are most likely Chironomid midges or gnats. They are easily mistaken for mosquitoes, but do not bite and do not pose a health hazard. “

Both mosquitoes and midges need water for their development and can occur in the same places, such as ponds, ditches and basins. But midge larvae burrow down into the mud, while mosquito larvae are at the water surface. The adults are very similar in size and appearance, yet the midge lacks the mosquitoes’ signature proboscis – the needle-like mouth – that is needed to bite. Another difference is that midge wings are shorter than the body, whereas mosquitoes have longer wings.

Although midge swarms are a nuisance, they do not bite or transmit diseases, and they will be gone in a few weeks. To reduce the numbers of midges at a home, turn off outside lights or change the bulbs to yellow “bug lights”. Commonly used bug zappers are also not recommended for either midges or mosquitoes; they tend to attract more insects than they kill, which results in the opposite effect than desired.

For any further questions or services please feel free to contact the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District by phone (661-942-2917) or check us out online at [www.avmosquito.org](http://www.avmosquito.org), like us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Antelope-Valley-Mosquito-Vector-Control-District/425659330805392>), or follow us on Twitter @AVMosquito.