

MOSQUITO PREVENTION IN CEMETERY VASES

Sacramento and Yolo counties have an estimated 247,000 in-ground cemetery vases in over 37 cemeteries. Standing water in vases create prime breeding sites for mosquitoes which can transmit West Nile Virus and other vector-borne diseases. The Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District, in conjunction with local cemeteries, is asking for assistance from the public in reducing the amount of adult mosquitoes produced within these vases by adding water crystals to flowering vases. Water crystals are free of charge and they are available at the cemetery offices.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question: What can I do to help?

Answer: If you plan to use a flower vase, or notice a flower vase holding water, that does not contain any water crystals, contact the cemetery office to get a packet of water crystals. Empty the contents of one pre-measured packet of water crystals into the empty vase, and then add water and flowers. If you need to dispose of old crystals, please deposit the material in a trash can. Water crystal packets are available free of charge.

Question: What are water crystals?

Answer: Water crystals are a super-absorbent polymer that soaks up water and turns it into a gel. This will eliminate the mosquito breeding source in the flowering vases, but allows flowers to remain fresh.

Question: How do water crystals work?

Answer: The chemical structure of the material traps water molecules forming a gel. When dry, water crystals appear as a white granular material. When water is added to the material, each granule expands as it soaks up water until it resembles a piece of rubbery ice. As the water is used by plants or evaporates, the water crystal shrinks back to its dry form. This process can occur repeatedly before the water crystals need to be replaced.

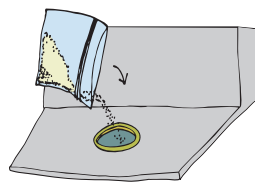


Question: How long will the water crystals last?

Answer: Water crystals can last many years depending on environmental conditions and its exposure to sunlight.

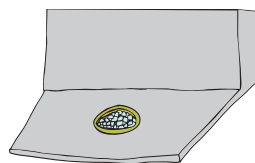
Question: Can I replace the water crystals if they get dirty?

Answer: Yes. Over time leaves and grass clippings will turn the water crystals brown, and become unsightly. Please dispose of the used water crystals in a trash can.



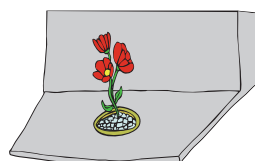
Question: Will my flowers be okay in water crystal gel?

Answer: Yes. Many florists use water crystals to prolong the freshness of cut flowers. Water crystals may be used with other products that are added to the water to keep flowers fresh.



Question: Are the water crystals safe?

Answer: Water crystals are non-toxic and environmentally friendly. Although non-toxic, the water crystals should not be eaten. Water crystals are extremely slippery when spilled, thus it is important to be careful when applying or disposing of them in dry or wet form.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District Ecological Management Department at (800) 429-1022 or visit www.FightTheBite.net/cemetery