

# Washington County helps fight West Nile with small, hungry fish

Washington County is distributing *Gambusia* fish to residents interested in reducing mosquito habitat on their property, thereby helping to prevent the spread of West Nile Virus. The fish, pronounced "gam-BOOZ-ee-ah," are intended for ornamental ponds, water troughs and other outdoor fixtures not connected to natural waterways.

"Don't be fooled by the miniscule size of these fish," said William T. Mary, the county's West Nile Virus prevention coordinator. "They have a hearty appetite for mosquitoes and their larvae and are an excellent way for residents to prevent the spread of West Nile right in their own back yard."

Reducing mosquito breeding areas is one of the key methods used by government agencies to help prevent the spread of West Nile. Their effort involves placing environmentally friendly larvicide into catch basins along city streets, maintaining active mosquito and bird surveillance and providing the public with educational materials and information.

Citizens can also take action to prevent contracting the virus. State and county officials recommend that citizens "fight the bite" by:

- Using tightly fitting screen doors and windows to keep mosquitoes out.
- Wearing long pants and long-sleeved shirts when out-

doors.

- Eliminating standing water, including clogged gutters, bird-baths and old tires.

- Avoid play and work outdoors at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.

- Using mosquito repellent, preferably one containing DEET, Picardin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always follow the directions on the label. When applying repellent to children, first rub it on your hands then on each child. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three.

West Nile Virus is a natural disease of birds that has existed in the United States since 1999. Mosquitoes become infected from feeding on an in-

fecting bird. The infected mosquito can then transmit the virus to other birds, humans and horses.

No cases of West Nile Virus have been reported in Washington County or the greater Portland area.

Most people who become infected, about 80 percent of cases, do not become ill. Some may develop mild flu-like symptoms. In rare instances, less than one percent, the virus causes a more serious condi-

tion called encephalitis or inflammation of the brain.

*Gambusia* fish are available to residents of Washington County at no cost. To request *Gambusia* fish (by appointment only) or for more information, call (503) 846-4930.

Additional information is available from the Washington County West Nile prevention information line at (503) 846-8890 or the Washington County Web site at <[www.co.washington.or.us/](http://www.co.washington.or.us/)>.

## Home offices are germ magnets

The home office is a surprising repository for germs. A study at University of Arizona indicated that the average desktop has more bacteria than any surface in the bathroom! Germs live on the telephone receiver, lurk on desktops, and hide out underneath piles of clutter.

To get at surfaces that need cleaning, start by establishing a simple routine: *Deal with It – File it – Pitch it*. To put this into practice, make three piles.

*Deal with It* is for anything that needs to be acted upon immediately, such as bills to pay and messages to return.

*File It* is for things that are not urgent, but need to be saved, such as bank statements, receipts, etc. Label the sections in this pile by subject, month or category – whatever works best for you.

*Pitch It* is for things that can be tossed or recycled

Once clutter is gone, cleaning can begin. An all-purpose disinfectant cleaner will take care of dirt and germs on the phone and desktop. To keep these surfaces continuously clean, add a pop-up container of wipes to the roster of desk accessories. Dust mitts and cloths, either the electrostatic variety or those embedded with a dusting product, are great for easy cleaning of picture frames, desktops, computer screens and office accessories.

Vacuuming the carpet will get rid of those "dust bunnies." For the floor, use an all-in-one mopping unit with wet wipes or squirtable liquid to get rid of surface grime on vinyl, ceramic tile, laminate, linoleum and finished wood floors.

## New phone scams seek banking information

In the past three weeks the Washington County Sheriff's Office has investigated several cases in which victims gave their banking information to strangers who called them on the telephone.

In one case the victim was led to believe that money generated from the 9/11 disaster would be deposited in her account.

suspect led the victims to believe that he was a law enforcement officer and that he had a person in custody for using the victim's credit card.

In one case the victim received what appeared to be an automated telephone call telling her to give her credit card information so that her brother could make telephone calls from the Washington County Jail. The jail personnel

do not call people and ask for credit card information.

In all of the above cases the victims gave the suspect their banking and personal information.

Deputies want to remind citizens to never give their banking or personal information to unknown persons on the telephone or the internet. A victim of identity theft or fraud should notify the appropriate law enforcement agency, report the incident to their bank, and notify any credit card issuer.



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