

Fact Sheet

Biting Midge in Redland City FAQ's

What are biting midge?

Biting midges are small, biting flies that can be found breeding along natural coastal habitats in mud/wet soils. For Redlands Coast this occurs along the intertidal mangroves and mudflat areas. Peak breeding season for biting midge is between spring and autumn each year.

What types of biting midge do we have in Redlands Coast?

Redlands Coast is home to many coastal biting midge species. The species that Council consider most common are *C. marmoratus*, *C. longior*, *C. molestus* s.s., *C. ornatus*, and *C. molestus* #5.

Are biting midge a public health risk?

Biting midge are not considered a designated pest under the *Public Health Act 2005*. They do not currently transmit any known disease to humans in Australia however their bites can cause localised reactions. For this reason it's important to protect yourself from being bitten and if you do have a reaction check with your local medical practitioner.

Why doesn't Council treat for biting midge?

Biting midges breed in the intertidal mudflats of the protected Moreton Bay Marine Park. Any chemical used within this area requires a permit from the Queensland Government.

Council has a Marine Parks Permit from the Queensland Government which permits the use of only two types of chemicals within the Moreton Bay Marine Park area. These chemicals are (S) *Methoprene* and *Bacillus Thuringiensis Israelensis* (BTI), both of which are target specific chemicals for mosquitoes and therefore do not harm any other aquatic organisms, including biting midge.

What chemicals are needed to treat biting midge?

Unfortunately, there are no biting midge larval specific chemicals that are registered for use in Australia. Any chemical products that are able to kill biting midges are considered general insecticides (or non-specific insecticides). This means that these insecticides also kill any other insects they come into contact with, as well as crustaceans and other aquatic life.

The use of these insecticides within the Moreton Bay Marine Park is not permitted by the Queensland Government, as their use could easily lead to fish kills and other negative impacts on essential marine life within the ecosystem. The restrictions on general insecticides also includes any waterway that connects to ecologically sensitive areas of the marine park, such as canal estates.

Why can't Council fog or spray for adult biting midge?

Fogging or misting insecticides for biting midge is not an effective or safe form of treatment. Fogging eliminates those biting midge present at the time of application, with more biting midge taking their place once the chemical dissipates. Not only are the treatments ineffective in managing biting midge numbers, the insecticides used will also kill any other insect (such as butterflies and bees) that come into contact with it.

Do biting midge breed in canals?

Redlands Coast canals are constructed using rock which are not used for breeding by biting midge. While biting midge do not breed in the rock wall canals, strong prevailing winds can blow them across the city from natural intertidal areas where they do breed.



Why do some other local governments treat for biting midge?

Some other local governments have canals that are constructed of sand rather than rock walls, which allow biting midge to breed in these areas. These areas are considered as man-made and some local governments have specific permits from the Queensland Government to treat these 'artificial' sand areas.

What can I do to protect myself from biting midge?

When venturing outdoors during peak biting midge breeding season, wear clothing that is long, loose-fitting and light in colour. Apply insect repellents (natural repellents can also be used) particularly to areas that are exposed and not protected by clothing.

What can I do around the home to protect from biting midge?

There are many options for residents depending on individual circumstances. These include:

- Install and maintain fine-mesh flyscreens on windows and doors of your home.
- Treat normal flyscreens with UV stable insecticide surface spray as biting midge are small enough to fit through normal flyscreen mesh.
- Use insect spray, mosquito coils or plug-in insecticide burners.
- Increase air flow inside the home by using fans or other air circulation devices.
- Keep vegetation surrounding the house to a minimum to reduce insect-harboring areas.
- Contact your local pest technician to discuss other suitable options such as barrier treatments.

What is Council doing to help manage biting midge?

While Council is currently not able to use insecticides to treat biting midge, we do partner with other representatives from all over South East Queensland local governments including the Regional Mosquito Management Group and Mosquito Management Arbovirus Research Committee, to keep up to date with the latest information and initiatives.