

## IS IT A MOSQUITO?

Mosquitoes are one of many groups of flying insects common to San Bernardino County. Others look similar, making it difficult to distinguish them from mosquitoes. Some bite and some don't, but none are of public health importance.



### **CRANE FLIES (*Family Tipulidae*)**

Crane flies resemble overgrown mosquitoes but are approximately four times the size of an average mosquito. They are sometimes mistakenly called "mosquito eaters" or "mosquito hawks" but unfortunately, they do not prey on mosquitoes. In fact, adult Crane flies do not bite or feed at all and live about four to seven days.

The sole purpose of the adult Crane fly is to mate. Females mate and lay slender eggs in or on soil, grass or mud within 24 hours of emerging from the larval stage. The eggs hatch into small, brown, wormlike larvae that

have very tough skin.

Crane fly larvae, also known as leatherjackets, damage lawns and plants when they feed on roots or leaves as they move from the soil to the surface to emerge in the spring.



### **MIDGES (*Family Chironomidae*)**

Midges are the most widespread and numerous insects resembling mosquitoes. Unlike mosquitoes, they do not bite and have no long proboscis. Adults are numerous around water, where most species congregate in large swarms during the mating season.

The midge larvae live in water such as lakes, ponds and other pools and are usually found in the bottom muck where they feed on algae. The larvae hatch in mass numbers in the water, with some species having red hemoglobin in the body fluids, thus giving the name "bloodworms."

Midges are often seen in summer months swarming in tall columns at dusk. Periodically they will rest in large numbers on walls or on screens.



### **GNATS (*Families Mycetophilidae and Sciaridae*)**

Fungus gnats occur around damp, decaying vegetation, algae and fungi and are primarily nuisances; they do not bite people or animals. They enter buildings as flying adults and develop indoors through all life stages.

Adult fungus gnats are similar in appearance to mosquitoes but are weak fliers and generally remain near potted plants and often rest on foliage, litter or decaying vegetation.