



Female

MOSQUITO FISH FACTS



Male

Mosquito Fish (*Gambusia affinis*) are indispensable to modern mosquito control programs and are provided to District residents free of charge. This relative of the common Guppy feeds primarily upon aquatic insects and prefers mosquito larvae. When natural food is not available, they thrive on weekly feedings of ordinary rolled oats, bread crumbs, or crushed dog biscuits. Mosquito Fish care is limited to protecting them from garden sprays and from chlorine or other chemicals used to clean the pond.

Gambusia can be introduced into streams, lakes, irrigation systems, drainage systems, sloughs, ponds, reservoirs, cisterns, shallow wells, animal watering troughs, and seepage areas--any standing water habitat that holds water year around. In ornamental ponds and unchlorinated swimming pools the fish will eat mosquito larvae as fast as they hatch. **DO NOT INTRODUCE MOSQUITO FISH INTO NATURAL STREAMS, RIVERS, PONDS, LAKES, ETC.** without consulting the Vector Control District and/or wildlife authorities. Mosquito Fish may compete with native fishes and other wildlife and have adverse effects upon them.

Mosquito Fish are compatible with most ornamental pond fish including Goldfish, Koi, and Carp and will not harm them. Lake and stream

sport fish, birds, frogs, and turtles prey upon Mosquito Fish.

A very hardy species, *Gambusia* can tolerate wide temperature and water quality ranges. Although they usually survive brief periods of nearly freezing temperatures, they may die after prolonged exposure. Sources stocked with Mosquito Fish should be examined after cold weather to verify that the fish are still present. *Gambusia* can tolerate heat very well and are able to survive temperatures above 100°F.

Female Mosquito Fish produce eggs that hatch within their bodies, releasing well-developed and very active young or "fry" into the water. *Gambusia* are prolific, producing three or four broods each summer, depending on the food supply and climate. A brood averages between 30 and 100 fry that reach maturity in three or four months. Under optimum conditions, each Mosquito Fish will live about a year.

At birth, fry are about 3/8 inches long. Fully-grown males are slender and about 1 to 1½ inches long. Females grow larger and more robust; about 1½ to 2½ inches long. At maturity, *Gambusia* are dark olive green on the back and silvery on the sides and belly.

MOSQUITO and VECTOR MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

of Santa Barbara County

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