

B2-C1 Worksheet: Should Google Release Millions of Mosquitoes? - 02 June 2026

Article

Google has asked for US approval to release up to 32 million treated male mosquitoes in parts of California and Florida. The proposal belongs to its Debug programme, which aims to carry out a large trial against mosquitoes that can pass on diseases such as dengue, Zika and chikungunya. At first glance, releasing insects to cut down insect numbers sounds like something from a disaster film. However, the company says the mosquitoes are male, effectively sterile and unable to bite people.

The method uses Wolbachia, a naturally occurring bacterium, to keep the target species in check. When treated males mate with wild females, the eggs do not develop, so local mosquito populations may die off over time. Supporters say this could be more effective than traditional spraying, especially as some mosquitoes become harder to control with pesticides. Earlier versions of the technology have been tested in places including California and Singapore, where officials reported sharp falls in mosquito numbers.

Even so, the plan is likely to raise concerns among residents who dislike the idea of millions of insects being released near their homes. US authorities must weigh up the evidence, the environmental risks and the public reaction before the project can go ahead. If the trial works, Google may try to roll out a scalable model for disease control in warmer cities. The bigger question is whether people will trust a technology company to solve a public health problem that feels both scientific and strangely personal.

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

1. Google has asked for approval to release treated male mosquitoes in California and Florida.
2. The article says the mosquitoes are designed to bite more people.
3. The Debug programme is connected to reducing disease-carrying mosquitoes.
4. Wolbachia is described as a naturally occurring bacterium.
5. The treated male mosquitoes help eggs develop into stronger mosquitoes.
6. Supporters believe the method may be more effective than traditional spraying.
7. US authorities still need to consider evidence, risks and public reaction.
8. The article says everyone already trusts the project completely.

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct definitions (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. asked for	A. to transmit something to another person or animal
2. carry out	B. to continue or proceed
3. cut down	C. to introduce something more widely over time
4. pass on	D. to request something formally
5. die off	E. to control something so it does not grow too much
6. roll out	F. to become fewer until little or no population remains
7. raise concerns	G. to think carefully before making a decision
8. weigh up	H. to make people feel worried
9. go ahead	I. to do or organise a planned activity
10. keep the target species in check	J. to reduce the amount or number of something

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. approval	A. conventional
2. sterile	B. proof
3. species	C. expandable
4. proposal	D. permission
5. authorities	E. worries
6. evidence	F. successful
7. traditional	G. officials
8. concerns	H. infertile
9. scalable	I. plan
10. effective	J. type

Use the new language

Please choose 5 words or phrases and make your own sentence using the new word or phrase.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. Do mosquitoes cause many problems where you live?	1. Why might a plan that sounds frightening still be scientifically reasonable?
2. Would you feel comfortable if treated mosquitoes were released near your home?	2. Should private technology companies carry out experiments linked to public health?
3. Have you ever tried to cut down mosquito numbers at home?	3. How much evidence should authorities require before approving a trial like this?
4. Which sounds safer: treated mosquitoes or traditional chemical spraying?	4. Is public fear a scientific problem, a communication problem or a political problem?
5. What would help you trust a public health project like this?	5. Could this approach be more ethical than relying heavily on pesticides?
6. Do you usually trust technology companies with health information?	6. What risks should officials weigh up before allowing the project to go ahead?
7. Should local residents be able to vote before such trials go ahead?	7. If the method works, should it be rolled out quickly in countries with mosquito-borne disease?
8. What public health problem should science try to solve next?	8. How can scientists raise concerns honestly without making people panic?

Answer Key

True/False: 1=T, 2=F, 3=T, 4=T, 5=F, 6=T, 7=T, 8=F

Phrase Match: 1=D, 2=I, 3=J, 4=A, 5=F, 6=C, 7=H, 8=G, 9=B, 10=E

Synonym Match: 1=D, 2=H, 3=J, 4=I, 5=G, 6=B, 7=A, 8=E, 9=C, 10=F

Example sentences with the phrases

1. Residents asked for more details before the trial began.
2. Researchers will carry out the study over two summers.
3. The city wants to cut down the number of disease-carrying insects.
4. Some mosquitoes can pass on serious diseases to humans.
5. If the plan succeeds, the local mosquito population may die off.
6. Officials should not roll out the method until the evidence is strong.
7. Community groups may raise concerns about unexpected effects.
8. Regulators need to weigh up the benefits and risks carefully.
9. The project should go ahead only if it is safe and transparent.
10. This method may keep the target species in check.