

Household and Structural

Department of Entomology

FLY CONTROL AROUND THE HOME

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FLY SPECIES OF CONCERN

Several species of flies may be encountered around the home. The house fly and various blow flies are among the more common of the larger flies. These flies are important household pests, not only because of the nuisance of their flying and buzzing, but because they may spread disease-carrying organisms (e.g., bacteria). House flies normally breed in fresh animal manure, but can also breed in decaying organic matter such as garbage. Blow flies (bottle flies) usually develop in decaying animal carcasses (such as rodents) and in discarded protein-rich organic matter in garbage.

During later summer and fall, warm winter days, and spring, cluster flies and face flies may become pests in homes. Cluster flies, sometimes called “attic flies,” may appear in the fall and winter but are especially active on warm, sunny days in early spring. They buzz around inside the home and collect in large numbers at windows, often in rooms that are not used regularly.

The cluster fly is larger and more sluggish than the common house fly. It can be recognized by the short, golden colored hairs on its thorax (that part of the body to which the legs and wings are attached). The larvae, or maggots, of cluster flies develop as parasites in the bodies of earthworms. Adult flies emerge in late summer and early fall, and seek protected places to spend the winter. In many cases, the flies find protection within the walls, attics, and basements of homes. Screens offer minimal protection because the flies prefer to squeeze through small openings found around the building. During the winter and spring, these same overwintering flies get into rooms through window pulley holes, cracks around baseboards, and other small openings.

Face flies are serious pests of cattle and may overwinter in homes and even invade them during the summer. They are more likely to be a problem in rural areas, particularly in homes located near pastures or where cattle are kept. Face flies so closely resemble the common house fly that only an expert can tell them apart. Their overwintering habits and controls are similar to those of cluster flies (i.e., sluggish movement, buzzing, collecting around windows).

CONTROL OF HOUSE FLIES, BLOW FLIES, SMALLER FLIES

Fly Control Outside

Sanitation - First Line of Defense: Insecticides alone cannot be expected to rid premises of flies. Flies breed in wet, decaying organic matter and can complete a generation from egg to adult in as few as 7-10 days. Sanitation practices include regular removal of animal/pet wastes, garbage, and all other decaying plant and animal matter. Garbage cans should have tight-fitting lids. Garbage cans must be emptied and cleaned regularly resulting in less material to serve as fly breeding sites. Homes should be kept screened during the summer.

Exclusion: Keeping flies from entering homes involves using tight-fitting window screens and closing windows and doors. Any broken screens or windows are an invitation to flies to enter.

Residual Sprays for Outdoor Use: Residual (long-lasting) sprays are useful for killing flies outside the home. Areas to be treated include porches, covered patios, garages, breezeways, doghouses or kennels, garbage cans, and similar fly resting places. Surfaces treated should be sprayed to the point of runoff. If picnic tables, benches, chairs, etc., are in the area, cover or remove them before spraying. Pets should be removed from the area until spray is dry. Insecticides recommended for residual outdoor sprays include: permethrin and related pyrethroids. (Check labels of specific insecticide products for active ingredient listings.)

Insecticide Baits for Outdoor Use: Baits kill flies rapidly, but their effectiveness is short-lived unless treatments are repeated. Baits are best used to supplement a spray program and can be purchased in ready-to-use formulations. Dry baits can be scattered around garbage cans or placed in garage windows or near other fly resting places.

Fly Control Inside the Home: Flies inside the home are best sometimes treated with synergized pyrethrins or synthetic

pyrethroids in aerosol or spray form. These materials give quick knockdown and kill of flies but do not provide lasting protection. They are most effective when applied into the air of closed rooms. However, such methods provide only short-term control because the larval fly stages remain.

CONTROL OF CLUSTER AND FACE FLIES

Cluster and face flies are difficult to control once inside homes because they hide in walls and other inaccessible places. The following procedures, although the best available, may not insure complete elimination of these insects.

1. Seal cracks and other openings through which the flies can enter from the outside. (Such a practice has the added value of reducing heat loss in winter.)
2. Using a 2- or 3-gallon compressed air sprayer, apply a residual spray to thoroughly wet the surfaces in attics, basements, closets, store rooms, and other areas where the flies are frequently seen. Avoid getting spray on food or clothing, and avoid spray runoff and puddling.

3. To kill the flies that buzz around rooms, use an insect spray or aerosol that contains synergized pyrethrins or synthetic pyrethroids. For best results, the room should be closed and the material misted into the air. Pyrethrins are “quick kill” insecticides and have little or no residual action.
4. Spraying the outside of the house, especially beneath the eaves, roof gables, and around the windows, has been shown to be a beneficial, preventive measure if applied in early fall. A residual spray, such as permethrin, can be used with some success, but a second treatment usually is necessary.

Be certain to carefully follow label directions when applying any insecticides.

SPECIES INFORMATION

- House fly - *Musca domestica* Linnaeus
- Little house fly - *Fannia canicularis* Linnaeus
- Blow flies - species of the family Calliphoridae
- Cluster fly - *Pollenia rudis* (Fabricus)
- Face fly - *Musca autumnalis* (DeGeer)



Blow Fly
1/8" - 5/8"



Face Fly
1/8" - 1/4"



House Fly
1/8" - 1/4"



Cluster Fly
3/8"

READ AND FOLLOW ALL LABEL INSTRUCTIONS. THIS INCLUDES DIRECTIONS FOR USE, PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS (HAZARDS TO HUMANS, DOMESTIC ANIMALS, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES), ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS, RATES OF APPLICATION, NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS, REENTRY INTERVALS, HARVEST RESTRICTIONS, STORAGE AND DISPOSAL, AND ANY SPECIFIC WARNINGS AND/OR PRECAUTIONS FOR SAFE HANDLING OF THE PESTICIDE.

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