

Vector Information Sheet

FLIES

House Fly



The house fly lives in close association with humans and domestic animals. It is a chief fly pest in California. Adults are dull gray, with four stripes on their thorax, and grow to about ¼-inch long. Adults are attracted to food, filth, and waste materials where they feed and deposit their eggs. Adult flies may be seen resting on overhead surfaces inside houses, barns, and stables and outside on undersurfaces of roof overhangs, fences, in weeds, shrubs and trees. These resting places always are close to food such as manure, wet feed, broken eggs, decomposed plant material including, grass clippings, vegetable and fruit wastes. The life cycle from egg to adult is seven to ten days. Adults live two to four weeks in the midsummer and up to ten weeks in cooler weather. Flies are inactive at temperatures below 45 degrees and usually die at temperatures below 32 degrees. Optimum activity occurs between 80 to 90 degrees with humidity around 40 percent.

Little House Fly



The little house fly is smaller than the house fly. The adult is black or dull gray in color. Adults usually congregate and are seen to hover in protected places such as breezeways, porches, and open garages. Females are seen more often when feeding or laying eggs in poultry manure and other animal excrement (dog, pig, chicken, rabbit), including that found in mammal nests. Eggs also may be deposited in decaying vegetable and animal matter, including compost piles, grass clippings, damp feed pallets, commercial fishmeal used as a fertilizer, and food residue in garbage cans. Their life cycle may vary from 3 weeks to 2 months. In Southern California, the Little House Fly may be present up to June, decreasing from July through September, until fall, when population may again increase.

Green-Bronze Blow Flies



Green-bronze blow flies are the most abundant of all blow flies in California. The bronze blow fly is more prevalent in southern and central California, the green in coastal and northern areas of the state.

Larvae of these blow flies are commonly found in the garbage. Females may lay eggs in animal carcasses, dog droppings, dead snails, fish, decaying fruit and vegetable waste, and occasionally in animal manure. The life cycle ranges from eight to twenty-one days and adults appear in dense populations from July through September. The green blow flies are particularly pestiferous around food and, since cooking odors attracts them, are the primary pest at outdoor patio barbecues or kitchens.

Fly Prevention and Control

Successful fly control can be accomplished by eliminating breeding sources, rather than trying to control and kill the adult flies. This involves an adequate system of disposal or utilization of the solid organic wastes that breed flies. The following are recommended for control of common fly sources:

Urban and Suburban Sources

- * Twice-a-week garbage collection, tightly fitted lids, cleaning the garbage containers/commercial dumpsters.
- * Grass clippings must be properly composted or removed at two-week intervals. If storing for a short time, tightly cover with tarp or spread thin and dry out.
- * Pet droppings need to be picked up on a daily basis. If buried, need to be in the thin layer.

Crop Production

- * Manure that is used as fertilizer must be promptly incorporated into the soil to prevent becoming a breeding source.
- * Prevent manure from retaining moisture and protect from irrigation water if exposed. Fruits and vegetables (culls and other processing wastes), if allowed to decay in piles that retain sufficient moisture, can be a source of house flies.
- * Culls and other processing wastes must be stabilized by composting or burying within seven days after harvesting.

