

Everything You Need to Know About Fly Infestations

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Having buzzing pests throughout your home is incredibly frustrating. You're probably wondering "how long do flies live?" and how to get rid of flies once and for all. There is so much information out there that you may be overwhelmed by a single Google search.

Well, look no further! Here at No Pest Metro West, we've put together a guide on these insects, giving you the information you need. There's a lot to learn!

About Flies

We're all familiar with flies -- those pesky critters that buzz around trash and expired food. While so many of them look the same, there are multiple distinct species that fall under the "diptera" order. Flies can range from aggressive and painful, like horse flies, to innocuous like little gnats.

Types of Flies

There's more to these pests than just the common housefly. These bothersome insects come in a variety of shapes and forms, come from different places, and are motivated by various needs. While the lifespan of a fly can be short, it doesn't stop them from causing problems.

Houseflies

Houseflies, as their name suggests, are most commonly found in homes. This species lays its eggs on rotten food, feces, and roadkill, and can produce anywhere from 75-150 eggs each time. The life of the common housefly is only weeks to a month, but they reproduce so rapidly that the infestation can quickly become overwhelming.

Are house flies harmful to humans?

While the flies themselves aren't directly harmful to humans, the germs and diseases they can spread can be. House flies land on garbage, manure, rotten food, and dead animals, exposing them to bacteria they can bring inside.

Cluster Flies

Cluster flies are very similar to house flies but are their own distinct species. Cluster flies usually appear in your house in the early fall as they look for a warm place to take shelter.

Cluster flies are noticeably larger than the common housefly, and travel more slowly. You can usually tell a cluster fly apart from a housefly because they are large, slow bugs that linger around windows.

Because of this, you may want to put sticky fly traps near windows to try and catch the cluster flies. You can always tell cluster flies from others, since they congregate in groups.

Deer Flies

The deer fly species is especially harmful to humans, as they feed on blood in order to reproduce. Deer fly bites cause skin irritation and leave red marks. Some people have allergic reactions to deer fly bites, and you can be exposed to various diseases when bitten by a deer fly. While they won't invade your house, a deer fly can be a nuisance if you come across them outside.

Drain Flies

Drain flies are small and recognizable by their unique wings and furry bodies. As their name suggests, they breed in drains, plumbing systems, and sewers.

How to get rid of drain flies

While drain flies aren't harmful, they're still a nuisance. For this reason, you may be wondering how to get rid of drain flies. Here's a simple, DIY way to get rid of drain flies: boiling water. Pouring a pot of boiling water down your drain once a week can help eradicate drain flies. This will not only kill the drain flies, but can remove the eggs the drain flies have already laid.

You could also use baking soda to your advantage to make a homemade fly trap.

- Combine ½ of a cup of baking soda and ½ cup of salt
- Mix in a cup of white vinegar
- Pour it down the drain and leave it overnight
- The next morning, pour a pot of boiling water down the drain to wash the drain flies away

If you're wondering how to get rid of drain flies, this DIY fly trap is a tried-and-true method.

Fruit Flies

Fruit flies are very common, yet so frustrating. They're attracted to fermenting or rotting fruit and vegetables. Female fruit flies lay up to 500 eggs at a time, which is why these pests can pop up out of nowhere.

Where do fruit flies come from?

Anyone who has let a bunch of bananas get overly ripe knows that these pests seem to show up overnight. Where do fruit flies come from, after all? Since they're so small, they sneak in through windows and doors. It's also possible that the fruit fly larvae were already on the fruit when you bought it.

Homemade Fruit Fly Trap

You might be looking to create a fruit fly trap DIY style. This is actually quite simple and safe!

The most common way to trap fruit flies is with apple cider vinegar and dish soap. The fruit flies will be attracted to the apple cider vinegar, then get caught in the soap.

Horse Flies

A horse fly is large, measuring up to 1 inch. Horse flies are among the worst to have around, as they bite humans. A horse fly bite isn't especially harmful, just momentarily painful. You'll be able to spot horse flies because of their size, and a horse fly bite can be enough to send you inside. Those nearby a farm are especially likely to come across horse flies.

Another place you can find horse flies is at the beach. This can be especially frustrating, since sand fleas occupy this area as well. (Sand fleas also bite!) It can be hard to avoid horse flies and sand fleas at the beach, resulting in a frustrating experience.

Sand fleas, though, are not flies: they're technically crustaceans. Unlike horse flies, you don't have to worry about sand fleas making their way into your house, since they remain outside.

Phorid Flies

Phorid flies are similar in size to fruit flies. What makes phorid flies more distinct is that they're slightly humpbacked and spread throughout the house more quickly than fruit flies. Phorid flies can be potentially harmful, as they spread bacteria.

Fungus Gnats

Fungus gnats may look like flies, but technically aren't. Even so, they cause a lot of the same issues. Fungus gnats are around the same size of fruit flies, and are attracted to moist soil. You can usually see fungus gnats flying in clusters, yet they aren't cluster flies.

Fungus gnats are completely harmless to humans. The only real "harm" these gnats cause is a grossed-out feeling when they fly towards your face! Making a gnat trap is quite simple, so you may be able to easily get rid of these pests.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do I have a lot of flies in my house?

There are so many potential reasons for a fly infestation. Here are a few:

- **Overripe fruit**

- **Spilled sweets**
- **Overfilled garbage cans**
- **Dead animals**
- **Feces**
- **Stagnant water**
- **Openings in your walls or windows** (This especially attracts cluster flies.)
- **Dirty pipes** (The perfect place for a drain fly infestation!)

Make sure to do a thorough examination of your house and search the surrounding area outside to see if any of these factors apply to you!

Can flies damage my home?

While flies won't cause physical damage to your home, it's still important to get them under control. Your house may be fine, but the family inside it won't be! Flies easily spread bacteria, and having a horse fly infestation will make it unpleasant and painful to go outside.

On the flip side, cluster flies may help you find damage in your house, since cluster flies bring awareness to cracks in the walls and windows.

How do I get rid of a fly infestation in my house?

If you're facing an issue like this, you're probably wondering how to get rid of flies. Luckily, there are a few ways.

- **Give us a call!** We have extensive experience in taking care of fly infestations. We'll do a thorough investigation then use effective fly trap methods to eradicate them.
- **Make a DIY fly trap, gnat trap, or fly repellent.** There are many different methods you can try to get rid of flies yourself. If you choose to make a homemade fly trap using chemicals, make sure you take extra precautions. (We go into more detail below on how to make a DIY fly trap.)
- **Find the root cause.** You can swat to your heart's desire, but if you don't address where the flies are coming from, you won't be able to get the issue under control.

How can I make a DIY fly trap or gnat trap?

There are plenty of ways to make a homemade fly trap or gnat trap.

- Mix apple cider vinegar with a dash of dish soap. The flies will be attracted to the vinegar, then get caught in the soap.

- Put rotting fruit in a jar and poke tiny holes in the top. The flies will enter the jar but won't be able to escape.
- If you have some leftover wine you aren't going to drink, leave the bottle open. If it's sweet wine, the flies will fly into the bottle and may drown.
- Light a candle near the problem area. The flies will be attracted to the light, and if you're lucky, will get caught in the wax.
- If the issue is drain flies, use drain cleaner, boiling water, and a metal pipe brush.
- If you are trying to control a deer fly infestation outside, coat a bright blue bucket with a substantially sticky material. (Deer flies are attracted to bright colors.)

What smells do flies hate?

Flies hate the smell of **basil**, **cloves**, **cinnamon**, and **citrus**. So if you're looking to make natural fly repellent or your own fly trap, consider including these items. Before you create homemade fly repellent or DIY fly traps, make sure they're safe.

How long do flies live?

The lifespan of a fly depends on the species, but is usually short. The lifespan goes in four stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. A fly's entire life is usually about **a month**.

Unfortunately, two of the most painful flies have the longest lifespans. Horse flies and deer flies can live **1 to 3 years**.

How do you know if you have a fly infestation?

Finding a few flies in your house isn't always cause for concern, but sometimes it's more than a few. Here are a few ways to tell if you have a fly infestation:

- You discover maggots
- Flies are regularly buzzing around
- There are dead flies near windows

You'll definitely know if you have a horse fly problem, because you'll be getting painful bites! If you're not sure whether or not it's a true infestation, give us a call and we can investigate for you.

Where do flies lay their eggs in the house?

If you have a fly infestation in your house, try to find the eggs early on. This way, you can prevent them from hatching into larvae and maggots. (A house fly larva takes around five days to hatch.)

You can usually find them in moist areas containing decaying material. This includes trash, food waste, drain pipes, stagnant water, garbage disposals, and overwatered houseplants.

Can you eat food a fly has landed on?

You absolutely should not eat food a fly has landed on. First off, they linger on roadkill, garbage, and animal poop, and can easily spread those germs to the food.

Secondly, since they don't have a mouth or teeth, they vomit up a digestion aid that breaks down the food so they can slurp it up.

Lastly, while house flies are eating, they can easily defecate on your food.

What attracts house flies?

House flies are attracted mostly by organic materials. Below are a few examples:

- Uncovered garbage cans
- Dead animals inside the house
- Animal feces or manure
- Overripe fruit
- Open alcohol containers
- Spilled soda, syrup, or other sweet substances

Can flies nest in your home?

Flies do not make nests. Instead, they lay their eggs on rotting matter or in moist soil. They choose these locations because once the eggs hatch into maggots, they automatically have something to feed on.