

Swatters come out, pesky flies won't quit

Written by Chris Lee

They're pesky, sometimes hard to kill and definitely not a welcomed visitor. But the big question from everyone is, "Where in the heck did they all come from?"

Roughly a month ago, one couldn't walk outside without being harassed by a fly or numerous flies. Then, for a week, they disappeared. Last week, they returned.

Fly swatters have been working overtime trying to contain flies in homes, businesses and schools.

So the question still looms—where did all of the flies come from? Why are there considerably more flies right now? Finally, how can people get rid of or control the flies?

There are many species of flies.

The housefly, *Musca domestica*, is a fly of the suborder Cyclorrhapha. It is the most common of all domestic flies, accounting for about 91 percent of all flies in human habitations, and indeed one of the most widely distributed insects, found all over the world. It is considered a pest that can carry serious diseases.



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Garbage cans around town have become mini cesspools of flies in recent weeks.☐☐

—Enterprise photo

Each female can lay about 500 eggs in several batches of about 75-150. The eggs are white and about 1.2 millimeters in length. Within a day, larvae, or maggots, hatch from the eggs. They usually live and feed on decaying organic material, such as garbage or feces.

They are pale, 3-9 millimeters long, have no legs and are thinner at the mouth end. The maggots live one week before they crawl to a dry, cool place and transform into pupae at the end of their third instar. The pupae are reddish or brown and about eight mm long. The adult flies then emerge from the pupae.

This entire cycle is known as complete metamorphosis. The adults live from two weeks to a month in the wild. After emerging from the pupae, the flies no longer grow. Small flies are not necessarily young flies. Instead, they are the result of getting insufficient food during the larval stage.

Thirty-six hours after having emerged from the pupa, the female fly is receptive for mating, making reproduction a quick process.

Flies depend on warm temperatures; generally, the warmer the temperature, the faster the flies will develop.

Perhaps this is why the area has been bombarded with flies recently. Having not experienced a freeze, the flies have been given an opportunity to live longer.

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Houseflies feed on liquid or semiliquid substances beside solid material, which has been softened by saliva or vomit. Because of their high intake of food, they deposit feces constantly, one of the factors that makes the insect a dangerous carrier of pathogens.

Although they are domestic flies, usually confined to the human habitations, they can fly for several miles from the breeding place. They are active only in daytime and rest at night, e.g., at the corners of rooms, ceiling hangings, cellars and barns, where they can survive the coldest winters by hibernation. When spring arrives, adult flies are seen only a few days after the first thaw.



Those dumping grass clippings in recent weeks have undoubtedly been introduced to the increase in flies this summer. Getting in and out of vehicles quickly doesn't do much as the crafty flies find their way into vehicles no matter what.☐☐

—Enterprise photo

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So what can be done to rid a house or business of all these flies?

The first step is to keep the house or office clean. Use orange, clove, lemon or basil oil in cleaning, as those oils repel flies. Make sure to keep surfaces wiped down and dry.

Also cover compost, garbage and platters of fruits or breads. Many companies make baskets for covering fruit platters with a fine mesh which allows the fruit to ripen without allowing flies to come in contact with it.

Another important item to install is screens on windows and doors so the home can ventilate without having insects enter. Always remember that tip the parents always said and keep the doors closed!

It has been shown that house flies do not like the smell of cloves, neither do some humans. They also don't like basil. Planting basil can repel flies so they will not be attracted enough to go in a home every time someone opens the door.

Fly traps are another method to get rid of the pesky flies. They are easy to use and are made for indoor and outdoor use.

Some people may opt for the buzzing of fly zappers. This is a little more expensive way to go. Fly zappers come in all shapes and sizes. The most common zapper hangs outside with a glowing light inside that zaps flies and other bugs away.

Zappers are also made that look like a tennis or badminton racket. These handheld devices zap flies right out of the air. There is also the common fly swatter which is what most people use when flies begin to get really bad.

Fly sprays are another way to go. There are many different types of sprays, pumps and wipes that repel flies.

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An old school item is the citronella candle. These usually sit on a patio table or around the campfire during the summer.

No matter the device, hopefully people can find the one that works for them. Check around locally in Holyoke for a solution. They can be found in stores around town. Heck, a rolled up newspaper works part of the time!

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