

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Nassau County



Horticulture Center
Demonstration & Community Gardens
at East Meadow Farm
832 Merrick Avenue
East Meadow, NY 11554
Phone: 516-565-5265

Cluster Flies

During the fall, many homeowners have invasions of the cluster fly (*Pollenia rudis*). These insects are also known as attic flies or buckwheat flies that in their larval or maggot stage are parasitic in the body of earthworms. Adult flies emerge in the late summer and early fall to seek protection for the winter. The adults are somewhat larger than the common house fly and enter homes or other heated buildings to pass the winter. The homeowner is bothered in the fall when the flies are entering and looking for dark corners in which to hide, and in the spring when they are trying to get outside again. Usually most of the flies go to the attic, but sometimes large numbers are seen at windows between the glass and screen. On sunny days in fall or winter, the attic may get warm enough that the flies are activated. Then many of them may get into the lower floors of the house. While the flies are considered to be a nuisance inside the home, they are not attracted to food or filth and are not believed to be a health hazard. This insect does not reproduce in the house. When the air gets chilly, they get sluggish and gather in clusters, hence the common name "cluster flies."

Control

1. Prevent entry of the flies. Close all openings where flies may enter, such as cracks in walls, under eaves and around doors and windows. Use caulking compound where possible to fill small holes. Sash cord openings can be protected by keeping either screens or storm windows in continuously. Taking screens off in early September and waiting until mid-October to put on storm windows leaves these openings available to the flies just at the time when most of them are seeking entry.

2. Kill flies once they have gained entry. Use a fly swatter or vacuum.

3. For severe infestations a high-air volume misting machine must be used. Because a special machine is needed and must be carried up the side of a structure, we suggest that a professional applicator be employed. To prevent flies from entering, the insecticide should be applied between August 15 and August 30. Certified applicators may also use a hydraulic sprayer. Flying insect sprays will give only temporary relief. Dispose of dead flies to avoid infestations of carpet beetles and other insects that feed on dead insects.



WHENEVER YOU USE A PESTICIDE,
ALWAYS READ THE LABEL AND FOLLOW THE
MANUFACTURER'S INSTRUCTIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS.

"This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or your regional DEC office (631) 444-0341. Read the label before applying any pesticide. Cornell Cooperative Extension and its employees assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of any chemicals for pesticide usage. No endorsement of products is made or implied."

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