

Management of Flies

Successfully managing flies in human living spaces requires putting prevention at the forefront. Below are some tips you can take to prevent flies from taking over your home:

1. Keep food preparation areas, food serving areas, and tools clean, including countertops, sinks, drains, and utensils, making sure to remove food remains and residues.
2. Cover prepared food immediately and bag ripening fruit.
3. Trash cans, dumpsters, and compost bins should be cleaned regularly. Their lids should be closed when not in use.
4. External dumpsters should be kept far away from entrances to homes and other buildings.
5. Rinse cans, bottles, and containers before recycling or discarding.
6. Clean up spills and food messes immediately to rid the area of food particles and residues.
7. Make sure mops and other cleaning tools are cleaned regularly, and store mops with the mop head up to allow it to dry.
8. Keep doors and windows closed. Make sure window and door screens are in place with no tears. Insect exclusion mesh with 22 openings per linear inch and openings no greater than 0.038" (0.965 mm) will prevent most flies from entering from the outside.
9. Clean sinks and drains regularly, making sure to keep them unclogged and free of organic matter.

10. Fix indoor water leaks in a timely manner and eliminate any other moisture problems.
11. Get rid of existing flies indoors using fly swatters or traps, such as sticky paper traps.
12. Make sure pet and/or wildlife food kept indoors is in a sealed container.
13. Frequently clean up indoor and outdoor pet and/or wildlife excrement and dispose of it properly.

Following the tips outlined above will help you and your family stay safe and reduce fly related health risks. Pest proofing your house can keep flies and many other pests from entering your homes and buildings. Read more about pest proofing in this publication available here: <https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1677-2015.pdf>



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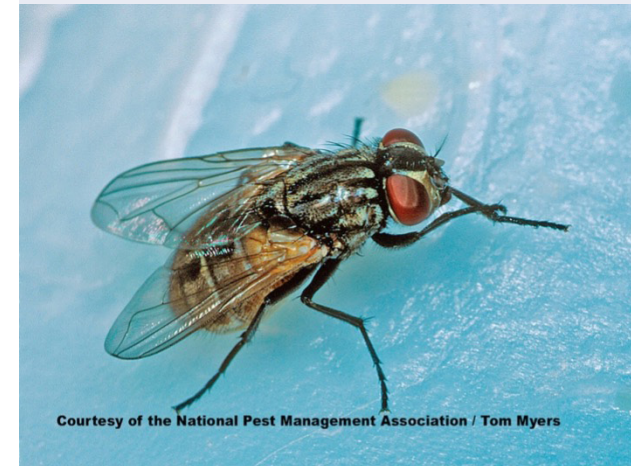
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Common Household Flies and Prevention Tips



Courtesy of the National Pest Management Association / Tom Myers

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Flies are common pests found throughout the state of Arizona. They are especially active during warm summer months. Some species of fly are known to be disease carrying “vectors” that can contaminate our food and pose a health risk.

Types of common household flies

The **common house fly** (Figure 1) is a widespread species of fly. Adult flies are about 1/4” long. They can carry disease causing germs called pathogens on and inside their bodies, which are easily spread to food when a fly lands on an exposed surface. Common house fly adults can be identified by the four dark stripes on the middle section of their bodies, called the thorax (Figure 1). Fly larvae live in and feed on decaying moist organic material including fecal matter and garbage, and are necessary decomposers.



Figure 1. Adult common house fly. Note the four dark stripes on the middle section of the body. Photo: Gladson Machado

Moth flies or drain flies (Figure 2) are small and fuzzy flies typically found near sources of water. They are about 1/8” long and look like a moth. Fly larvae develop in wet or damp areas that have rich organic decaying matter, which the larvae feed on. These breeding sites commonly

include places like floor drains, sink overflows, buckets, and other containers that contain water and organic matter exposed to air. They are a major pest in kitchens and food preparation areas.



Figure 2. Adult moth fly or drain fly. Identified by their small size and fuzzy bodies, with appearance similar to that of a moth. Photo: Michel Vuijsteke

Fruit flies (Figure 3) are common unwelcome guests in homes and places where food is kept. They are small flies (about 1/8” long) with bright red eyes. They are attracted to ripened or rotting fruit and are also drawn to moist organic matter.



Figure 3. Adult fruit fly. Identified by light tan to orange color and bright red eyes. Photo: André Karwath

They also like sugars such as juices and sodas. They reproduce very quickly on rotting food and can be a common indoor problem.

Fly Life Cycle

The life cycle of the fly species described begins with the female laying eggs, usually in moist organic matter (Figure 4). This can include rotting food residues in trash cans or drains, compost, or animal feces. The eggs hatch quickly into fly larvae (also called maggots), which then feed on organic matter until they pupate. Inside the pupa, the larva changes into an adult fly and emerges to continue the life cycle. Adult flies can carry and spread harmful germs that cause human disease.

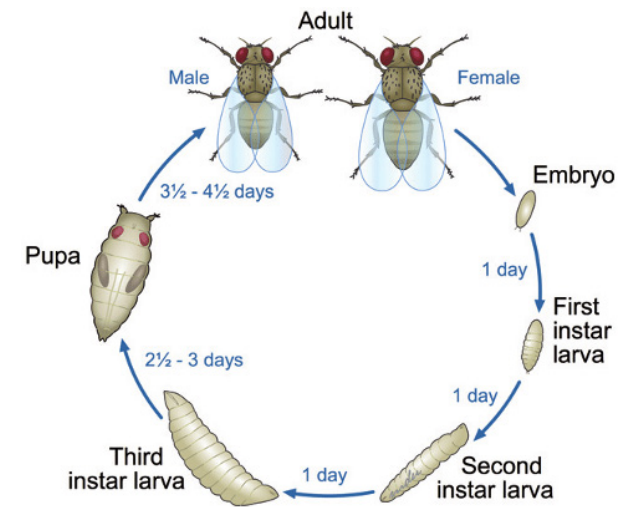


Figure 4. A life cycle of the fruit fly *Drosophila*. It is relative fast and takes about 2 weeks at 25°C. Photo: Ong et al., 2014.

Understanding a fly’s life cycle is important for successful prevention and control of these pesky insects. It is easiest to rid your home of flies by tackling the problem at its source using exclusion and sanitation methods.