Common Indoor Flies

Simple vinegar trap baited to capture small fruit flies

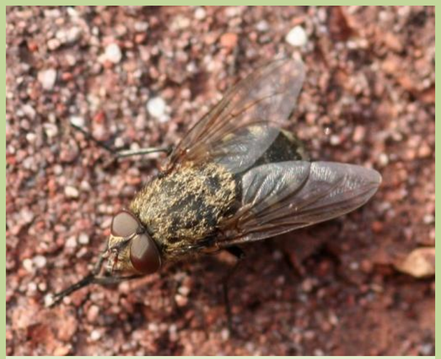
Several kinds of flies may be found in homes and buildings. Some, such as those commonly present during cooler months, normally use buildings only as an area of temporary shelter and breed during warm months in outside sites. Other flies, including most of the smaller species, may reproduce indoors on suitable food materials such as fermenting fruit, organic matter associated with plumbing, or the soil of houseplants. Identification of flies found in the home can allow one to better understand the nature of the infestation and to choose the actions needed to manage them, if necessary.

Life stages of the house fly.
Photograph courtesy of Clemson University.

Larger Flies

Cluster Flies

(*Pollenia* species)
Cluster flies are often the most common fly found indoors during winter, particularly at higher elevations. They are generally gray colored but are distinguishable by having golden curly hairs on the thorax. During the warmer months cluster flies develop on earthworms; in late summer they move to sheltered locations, including buildings. During the cool season cluster flies are in a semi-dormant condition. During this time they will not reproduce but may be occasionally stirred to lazy flights on warm days.



Cluster fly Length:

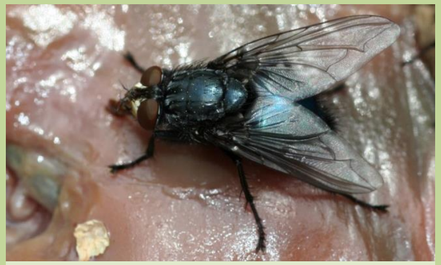
Black Blow Fly

(*Phormia regina*)
The black blow fly is a shiny dark blue-green fly. Like bluebottle flies, the black blow fly does not go into a winter dormant period and can be active year round on sunny days when temperatures allow (above about 50° F). Larvae develop on carrion or manure.

Black blow fly Length:

Bluebottle Flies

(*Calliphora* species)
Bluebottle flies are heavy-bodied flies that are generally a metallic blue-black. They are active year round and may incidentally enter buildings during warm months and actively seek out buildings and other protected sites for shelter during the cool season. Larvae develop primarily in carrion, but they may also breed in certain types of organic garbage and animal excrement.

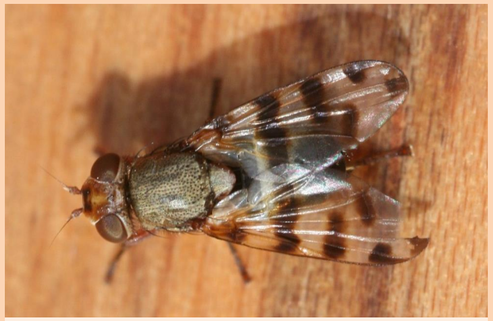


Bluebottle fly Length:

Medium Flies

Picture-winged Fly

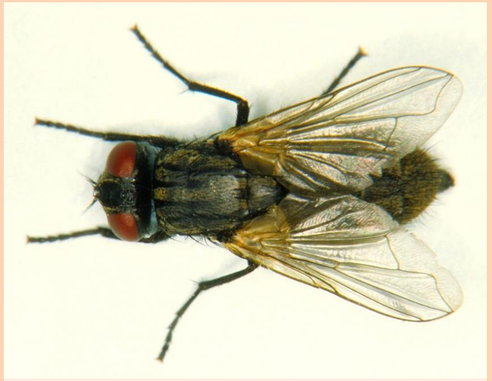
(*Ceroxys latiusculus*)
The picture-winged fly, *Ceroxys latiusculus*, is a light brown fly with conspicuous dark spotting on the wings. The larvae develop on *Senecio*, an aster family plant. Adults move to sheltered locations in late summer and may enter buildings at this time. They are in a semi-dormant state during the winter months and, like cluster flies, do not reproduce in buildings.



Ceroxys latiusculus Length:

House Fly

(*Musca domestica*)
The house fly is primarily an incidental invader of buildings during the warmer months. Larvae develop on decaying plant matter.



House fly Length:
Photograph courtesy of Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska

Smaller Flies

Moth Flies

(*Psychoda* species)
Moth flies have a unique appearance with broad, slightly hairy wings that give them the appearance of a minute moth. The larvae develop on the bacteria that frequently coat plumbing and other continuously wet sites.

Moth fly Length:

Drain Fly

(*Megaselia scalaris*)
The drain fly, *Megaselia scalaris,* is a tiny fly with a distinctly humped body form. The larvae develop in semi-solid foods and those found in homes most often originate on debris trapped in plumbing or associated with plumbing leaks.

Drain fly Length:

Small Fruit Flies/Vinegar Flies

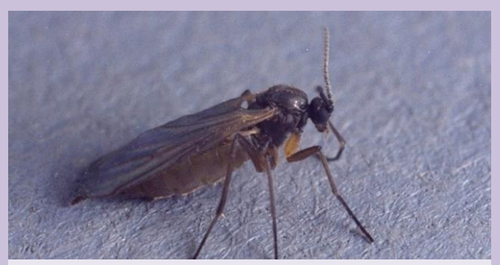
(*Drosophila* species)
Small fruit flies are tiny, light brown flies, often with red or reddish-brown eyes. The larvae develop on yeasts associated with fermenting materials, such as overripe fruit or beverage residues, and they are most common in homes in late summer, often introduced on the ripe fruit of late summer harvests.

Larvae of small fruit flies in an overripe banana. Length:

Small fruit fly ("vinegar fly") Length:

Fungus Gnats

(*Bradysia* species)
Fungus gnats are generally dark colored small flies with delicate body form. This fly can breed indoors as the larvae develop in soil of houseplants, primarily feeding on decay fungi present in the soil. Adults are weak fliers and are usually found near plants, but may most noticeably collect at nearby windows.



Fungus gnat Length:
Photograph courtesy of Ken Gray, Oregon State University.

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