

# Cluster Flies



## Description

Cluster flies are common throughout the United Kingdom and are usually found in areas of grassland which allows the adult flies to lay their eggs. They are often identified in considerable numbers on sunny south-facing walls. This will often result in walls becoming tainted by 'fly spots'.

In spring and autumn several species of fly may be found in large numbers in houses. Both Cluster and swarming flies enter properties when temperatures begin to deteriorate to seek a suitable place to hibernate. These places tend to be the lofts/roof spaces of houses and farm buildings. Unless disturbed, these flies will hibernate successfully until temperatures begin to climb during the Spring. It is not uncommon for these flies to leave a scent which will encourage cluster flies to return year on year.

## Biology and Habitat

There are four types of fly known as 'Cluster Flies', these are the Autumn Fly (*Musca autumnalis*), Common Cluster Fly (*Pollenia rudis*), Green Cluster Fly (*Dasyhora caynella*), and Yellow Swarming Fly (*Thaumatomya notata*).

Cluster flies lay their eggs in the earth or in animal dung. The eggs remain in the earth and hatch when temperatures increase in the Spring. The larvae then burrow into the bodies of earthworms where they grow, and emerge as a cluster fly. This life cycle usually takes from 27 to 39 days.

## Control

The life histories of several of these species are somewhat unusual, and little, if anything can be done about controlling them at source, so the answer is to deal with them as they come in.

If the property becomes infested every year and they cause a significant problem, it is worth carrying out a number of preventative measures towards the end of the Summer. This can be achieved through the prevention of structures that encourage cluster flies into buildings. This can be done through the use of sealing products to close entry points into the walls and roof of the building.

Inside your property, for example window pulleys, electrical sockets, window and door frames should all be sealed to prevent cluster flies coming in for shelter.

You can treat infestations of Cluster Flies yourself through the use of a proprietary knock down fly spray which can be purchased from nearby DIY stores/ supermarkets. If they are coming into bedrooms then the quickest and easiest way is to collect them with a vacuum cleaner and dispose of the bag afterwards.

It is not unknown for previous generations of Cluster Flies to leave a scent to allow the Flies to follow and return to the same place the next year. This can be removed through the use of a strong disinfectant around eaves, soffits etc as this will mask the scent. This should prevent flies returning year after year.

### **Reasons for Control**

Cluster flies do not feed on dead animal bodies or faeces and as a result do not necessarily pose a risk to public health. However, they can spread disease when they fly from place to place like any other fly, similar to cross contamination that can occur through poor personal hygiene.

Fibre glass insulation and loft spaces can look unsightly when covered with bodies of flies, but the structure of your roof will not be altered and no damage is likely to occur.

**For Pest Control treatment: 01454 868001**

**Free Internet access is available at all South Gloucestershire libraries**

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