

Stable Fly

Common Name: Stable fly

Common Family Name: Muscid flies

Other Names: Biting stable fly, beach fly, dog fly



Origin: This species is found throughout North America and Europe.

Biology: Both male and female adults are blood-feeders, with a long, stout, piercing mouth that easily distinguishes them from the similar house fly. This proboscis is held like a bayonet under the head and pointing slightly forward. Their common name is derived from the common occurrence in livestock stables, where they find abundant and suitable conditions for their larvae in the mixture of hay, feces, and urine that may accumulate. It commonly breeds in pet droppings in residential settings, as well as the other typical habitats of decaying organic material. The bite is usually painful, and commonly is around the ankle or lower leg. They are not incriminated specifically as disease vectors, but it is assumed they have the potential to vector some kinds. The cycle from egg to adult may be from 11 to 30 days, averaging around 3 weeks. Adult flies live about 3 weeks.

Identification: Stable flies are very similar to the House Fly, but easily separated by their long, sucking mouth. Adults are about 5 to 6 mm long, with several longitudinal stripes on the top of the thorax, and without the yellow sides of the abdomen that the House Fly has. On the top of the abdomen there are a number of round, dark spots that give it somewhat of a checkered appearance.

Characteristics Important in Control: Elimination of breeding sites for the larvae is extremely important, and in an urban setting this may be pet feces in yards or piled, decomposing lawn clippings. In rural areas the accumulation of livestock or poultry feces will produce vast numbers of flies. The use of fly repellents on the skin, particularly around the lower legs, will reduce biting problems, and the use of residual insecticides applied to surfaces the adults are seen to land on will reduce their numbers.