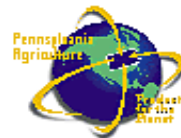




The Pennsylvania IPM Program



House Flies: IPM Controls Near Your Home

Notes from the SWAT team

House flies are commonly seen during warm and humid conditions. They are known to congregate in houses and barns, hence giving them their name. To control flies around the home an integrated pest management (IPM) plan should be implemented. The basics of IPM fly control are listed below.

Scouting / Inspection:

Look around the home for areas where flies congregate and are feeding or laying eggs. Barbecue grills, trash and recycling containers, piles of vegetation and pet areas are possible places of fly feeding or breeding. House flies are natural composters and will seek rotting vegetation and other high protein food sources to feed and breed, especially if it is moist or wet. Flies also regulate their body temperature much like reptiles, so that you will find them either on southern exposures or in or near garages, and soffit overhangs. In addition, flies are attracted to light colors, so white trim and window frames will be logical places of attraction.

Fly populations can be monitored using “speck cards”. Wherever flies congregate they deposit feces leaving small “specks” on surfaces and buildings. “Speck cards” are white 3”x5” cards, otherwise known as index cards. These may be purchased at office supply and other stores. Tack or tape the cards to the surface where flies have been seen. Count weekly how many fly specks are found on the cards. Counts over 100 will mean some action for control should be taken.

Weigh options of control and apply accordingly:

How many flies do you have? The IPM approach recommends that multiple methods be used to combat fly populations, and that management efforts be tailored to the fly population severity. Available controls include (in order of preferred IPM use):

- **Clear and clean** – Pick up all trash, animal droppings and other food sources of flies. Wash out all refuse and recycling containers and keep them away from entry points to the homes. Removing food and water sources is the most effective way to control and prevent house fly infestations. Water is a necessity for flies and the drying of all bedding and manure near stables and other livestock enclosures will assist in house fly control.
- **Make a Fly-tight House** – Check all windows and doors to be sure they are fly-tight. If you can see light under the door you can assume a fly will be able to pass through. Don’t forget to check garage doors as well. Also check duct pipes to bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans. These should be screened during heavy fly periods. Be sure to close your chimney flues as well.
- **Use Passive Controls** – Fly paper strips, attractant bottle/bag traps, and in some cases electric fly zappers can help reduce fly numbers. Be sure to follow all instructions with the particular method you are using. Hang bottle/bag traps low to the ground in full sun **AWAY** from the structure you wish to protect, and service them regularly. Fly zappers should be used only indoors (typically, garages) as they will attract other insects to their location if placed outside. Place them on timers to work at night in garages that receive natural light. Refer to the other side this handout for additional information.
- **Chemical Controls** – Use as a last resort, over usage leads to fly resistance to chemicals. Be sure to follow all instructions and apply only as needed. Yard foggers and other “knock down” materials are only effective for short periods of time. Fly baits can suppress populations for longer time periods. Do not use pesticides near food or other highly sensitive areas. Be sure to dispose of containers properly. Keep small children and pets from touching bait stations and other insecticide spots. Fly sprays

(organophosphates) attack the nervous system of flies and other pests, causing death. Humans should be careful when handling these items. Wash hands thoroughly and do not ingest.

- **Examples of Passive Controls**



Sticky fly paper attracts flies and doesn't allow them to escape. Disposable. General price per roll is much less than \$1, but ultimate price depends on how many are in a package or box. Can be purchased on-line or in local hardware, home improvements, lawn/garden and big box stores. Place at least 30 feet from house or porch.

Serious about attracting flies? The super fly roll attracts flies and doesn't let them escape. Disposable. General price range per roll is \$6-9. The super roll is available on-line. It will be harder to find in local stores. Place at least 50 feet away from house or porch to attract the flies away from your residence. Pull out 3 feet of fly roll at a time.

Jug trap for non-biting flies. Uses attractant to lure flies. Some are disposable, others reusable. General price range \$8-25. Can be purchased on-line, or in local hardware, home improvement or lawn/garden stores. Place at least 50 feet away from house, and on the ground. Replace when flies look shiny (indicates different type of fly, eating the trapped ones).

- **Examples of Chemical Controls**



Examples of fly sprays and baits. Non-poison controls are available, but have a different mode of control, and it may take longer to achieve a similar knock-down of flies as products with organophosphates. Some products can be found at local hardware, lawn/garden and big box stores. Many more products are available on-line. Prices vary greatly, depending on product and quantity. Overuse of chemicals creates resistance by flies to the product. Follow label instructions carefully!

Websites – Where trade names appear, no discrimination is intended, and no endorsement by Penn State Cooperative Extension is implied.

www.saferbrand.com

www.valleyvet.com/ct_farm.html

www.victorpest.com

www.tractorsupply.com/livestock/

www.zoecon.com/products.htm

Review and Consider:

After two weeks of applying a new control, review how well the control is working by observing “speck card” counts. Adjust the management program as necessary. By using an IPM program you systematically work through a plan to anticipate and control fly numbers without using strong chemicals unless warranted. Adherence to IPM approaches typically reduce the cost of control.

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SWAT – An integrated team of Extension educators, ag industry professionals, and farm individuals interested in animal IPM and the control of flies in rural and suburban locations. For more information on IPM, visit: <http://paipm.cas.psu.edu/index.html>