

## HOUSEFLY *Diptera: Muscidae Musca domestica*

### DESCRIPTION

The house fly **adult** is 7 to 8 mm long. The dorsum of the thorax is dusty-gray in color with four equally broad longitudinal black stripes. The scutellum is gray with black sides. The female has a broad velvety black frontal stripe on the head. **Larvae** are creamy-white, "carrot-shaped", legless maggots, 7 to 10 mm long.

### ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

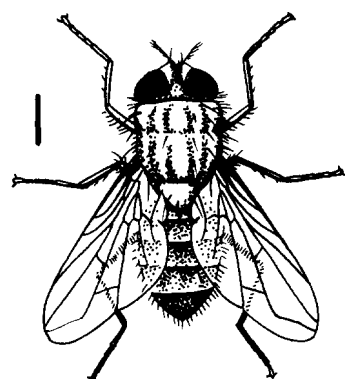
The housefly commonly invades homes and is an annoyance to the homeowner. Houseflies also are known to be vectors of typhoid fever, yaws, dysentery, anthrax, and some forms of conjunctivitis. The adults are responsible for the transmission of these disease organisms because of their feeding on fecal material then contaminating food. Since house flies do not bite, these diseases are transmitted mechanically through contamination of the mouthparts and other appendages.

### DISTRIBUTION AND LIFE HISTORY

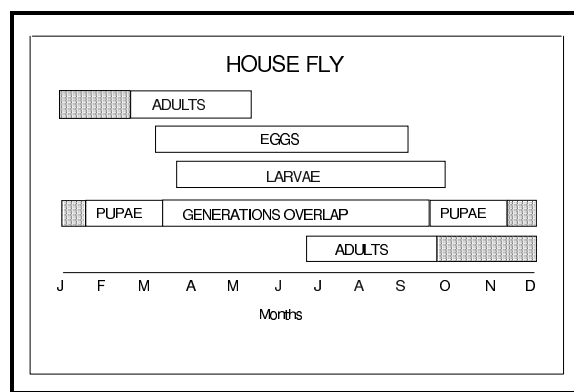
The house fly is distributed worldwide and is probably the most common insect in and around homes. House flies breed in organic matter such as manure, garbage, cannery wastes, decaying straw and other organic matter. Eggs are laid in masses of 75 to 150 in the breeding material, and several batches of eggs may be laid at intervals of three or four days. Females may lay up to 1,000 eggs during the egg laying period. The eggs hatch into tiny larvae (maggots) in eight to 12 hours, and the larvae feed for about five days before pupating. Pupation occurs away from the moist breeding material in nearby drier habitats. The pupa stage lasts about four to five days, depending on the temperature. A total of about 10 days is required to complete development from egg to adult. Female flies begin laying eggs nine to 12 days after emerging from the pupa. There may be two to three generations each month in warm weather.

### MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Control of house flies involves: 1) reduction of the population to a minimum through sanitation and food management in potential breeding areas, and 2) the use of registered insecticides to control those flies that are still able to develop. The best approach is to



(after USDA)



practice integrated management by using multiple tactics to reduce populations. First, breeding sites should be identified and destroyed; place garbage in plastic bags to reduce odors that attract flies, keep garbage cans closed, in rural areas, scatter manure so that it dries quickly, compost yard debris and other organic matter in closed containers, screen windows and doors. Attractant traps, sticky traps, electrocuting traps, baits, may be effective to reduce adults in buildings, but the number of traps or bait stations and their location is important to achieve control. Insecticides are often used to reduce fly populations. However, total reliance on insecticides usually only provides short-term control. See the Pacific Northwest Insect Control Handbook for a list of registered insecticides and specific information on their use in different areas.