



URBAN ENTOMOLOGY FACT SHEET

Humpbacked Fly

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Identification: This is the humpbacked fly. It belongs to the insect family Phoridae. Flies in this family are very small 1.5-2.5mm and have an arched thorax, which gives them the humpbacked appearance. Most are black or dull brown, but a few are yellowish in color.

Life Cycle and Habits: The entire life cycle lasts approximately 25 days, depending on environmental conditions and the availability of food. The larvae develop in areas where there is moisture and dead organic matter available. They feed on the fungi present in these areas. Adult females can detect rotting materials at the very first moment of decay and will go almost anywhere to find a place to lay eggs. They are also attracted to some organic solvents.

Adults can be observed running about on in a characteristic quick, jerky manner. They are often found in bright areas, such as windows. Their feeding habits include a wide variety of moist plant and animal (organic) materials including: dead insects, dead plants, sour milk, feces, lab culture media, dead animal tissue, wounds, etc. They are often associated with drains, drip pans under refrigerators, garbage disposals, garbage cans, vases with cut flowers, soil of potted plants, damp ceiling tiles, and under concrete associated with plumbing/sewage leaks.

Damage: Phorid flies are mainly nuisance pests. However, when the larvae infest food preparation areas or hospitals they can be a health threat due to contamination.

Control Measures: This is one of the hardest pest problems to handle. Inspect for problem areas. Sticky traps placed in possible breeding can help you pinpoint areas with the highest densities and monitor the effects of control strategies. The only sure cure is to eliminate all potential feeding and breeding sites. Check drains, drip pans under refrigerators, garbage disposals, garbage cans, vases with cut flowers, soil of potted plants, and damp ceiling tiles. Repairing faulty plumbing, eliminating standing water, cleaning organic lining from pipes, and managing trash or other wastes properly is important. Sealing cracks in crevices in areas where moisture is unavoidable will help. Some species are attracted to light traps. Chemical insecticides are only effective temporarily against the adult stage and should only be used after feeding and breeding sites have been eliminated.