

## **Blow Fly**

The blowfly or bottle fly, as it is commonly known, is a fly species that is associated with dead animals and people. In fact, forensic entomologists use the developmental stage of the blowfly to pinpoint the time of death.

### **Identification**

An adult blowfly is metallic green, blue, bronze, or black in color. They grow to be between 1/8 – 5/8th of an inch in length. Blowflies are slightly larger than a common housefly. They have sponge-like mouthparts. The worm-like larvae, also known as maggots, are pale yellow to white in color. They are eyeless and legless. Their back end is larger and rounder than their tapered head.



Adult of Blow Fly

### **Life Cycle**

The life cycle of the blowfly is fairly simple and quick. An adult female blowfly lays her eggs (up to 2,300) on the flesh of a dead animal. Depending on the species, the larvae will hatch in only a few hours or a few days. The maggots will bury themselves deep in the animal's tissue to feed and go through their three developmental stages. After several days the maggots will leave their food source and enter into nearby soil to pupate. Within a few days, the blowfly will emerge from the soil as an adult, completing the life cycle. Because these flies land on feces and dead animals they can carry dangerous diseases and bacterium their bodies. If they land on human food or food prep areas they can spread and infect people with some very serious diseases. Blowflies can spread bacterium that can cause severe diarrhea and cholera, along with other pathogens that include plague, anthrax, tularemia, and tuberculosis.

### **How Serious Are Blow Flies?**

## **Disease Transmission**

These flies transfer infections to humans through contaminating food and food preparation surfaces. Also it is possible to transfer disease organism when a blow fly comes into contact with an open wound or lesion on people, livestock or pets. When the insects feed, pathogens attach to their bodies. These pests can spread dysentery, eye infections, and other illnesses.

## **Signs of Infestation**

Adults can be spotted resting on surfaces or checking out potential food or odor sources. Spotting larvae often happens when they move out of breeding sources to pupate.

## **How Do We Get Rid of Blow Flies?**

To control blowflies around your home you should make sure that outdoor garbage cans are properly secured with a tight fitting lid. If you have pets, than their excrement should be routinely picked up so that it does not build up in your yard. To prevent blow flies from getting into your home be sure that all screens in doors and windows are intact and that any gaps or cracks in your home's exterior are properly sealed. If control is necessary within your home we treat the infestation with an appropriately labeled insecticide. It may also be helpful to place insect light traps or sticky-surfaced traps in areas to reduce their numbers.