



## URBAN ENTOMOLOGY FACT SHEET

### Green Bottle Fly

Richard M. Houseman

**Identification:** This is *Phaenicia serricata*. It belongs to the insect family Calliphoridae. These medium-sized flies have shiny green bodies and large reddish eyes.

**Life Cycle and Habits:** The entire life cycle ranges between 10 days and 5 weeks, depending on environmental conditions. Females lay eggs in batches of 180 eggs, and produce about 2,000 eggs during a lifetime. Larvae hatch from the eggs in 8-40 hours and feed primarily on garbage, excrement, or dead carcasses, completing development in 5-9 days. Mature larvae do not feed and are mobile, moving up to 50 feet per day in search of a dry location to pupate. The pupal stage varies between 3 days and 4 weeks, depending on temperature. Adults emerge from the pupal case, feed, mate, and produce new offspring. There may be as many as 10-12 generations per summer.

Most filth flies stay within 1-2 miles of their larval habitat if sufficient food is available. Their mouthparts only allow them to feed on liquids so they liquefy most foods by regurgitating on the food and ingesting the resulting liquid. Females seek warm, moist organic material in which to feed and lay eggs including: pet feces, garbage, dead organisms, etc. During the day, house flies rest close to the ground (<5 ft.). At night they will move away from the ground (>5ft.) and typically nest near their food sources.

**Damage:** Filth flies are not only nuisance pests, but they have also been shown to harbor over 100 different pathogenic organisms. Their habits of visiting a wide variety of substances, regurgitating and ingesting at each, and depositing fecal materials, makes them in the least a threat to good sanitation.

**Control Measures:** Filth fly control is a four-step process. Inspecting suspected fly breeding and development sites is the first step. It might be good to do this at night when the adult flies are resting near these areas. Pay particular attention to areas containing garbage, pet waste and feces. Sanitation is the next step and is the most effective measure in eliminating the fly problem. It involves the removal or elimination of food and breeding sites. Since all wastes cannot be eliminated for practical purposes, mechanical control measures should be implemented following sanitation. Mechanical control includes the use of tight-fitting garbage containers, tight-fitting windows and doors, and secure screening on all openings. Finally, insecticidal control includes applying appropriately labeled pesticides. There are a variety of over-the-counter treatment formulations (powders, baits, aerosols) that can be used to treat walls, dumpsters, and other breeding sites after other control measures have been implemented.