

# FLY CONTROL AND YOUR PROPERTY

## FLIES

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The four most important kinds of flies are house flies, bush flies, blow flies and stable flies. This pamphlet is primarily concerned with house flies due to the diseases they carry.

## DISEASES FLIES CAN CARRY

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The house fly (*Musca domestica*) is known to be important in the spread of disease. Amoebic dysentery, cholera, gastroenteritis, parasitic worm, paratyphoid, poliomyelitis, salmonella, shigellosis, trachoma, tuberculosis and typhoid fever are just some of the diseases capable of being spread by flies.

Flies pick up bacteria while they are feeding. They are attracted to rubbish dumps and bins, excreta (human and animal), partly digested or decaying food and rotting carcasses. Bacteria stick to their hairy legs and can then be brushed off onto food. Before the fly starts to eat, it vomits a fluid (loaded with bacteria) onto the food, and then partly sucks it up. It may leave behind some fly excrement, also likely to be loaded with bacteria.

## WHERE THEY BREED

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**House flies** are attracted to houses, particularly where a handy food supply and breeding site are available. Eggs are laid mainly in anything that is rotting e.g. vegetation, rubbish bins, soiled rags and paper, lawn clippings and compost heaps. In warm weather (up to 35°C), fly pupae can grow into an adult fly capable of breeding in just 12 days.

## WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS?

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**Blow Flies** tend to be most prevalent from December through February, but are generally present all year. Common blow flies are larger in size, have a loud buzzing sound and can be metallic green, brown or brown and blue.

They are attracted to the same sites as house flies, e.g. rotting meat, and can also be a serious threat to health. Meat left exposed may be 'blown' when a female blow fly lays eggs, or sometimes larvae (maggots) in it.

Normal house fly control should also take care of blowfly breeding around the house.

**Bush Flies** are usually at their worst during the same period as house flies, December through February. However, bush flies tend to be smaller and rarely go indoors. When inside they gather immediately at windows to try to get out. Bush flies do not breed around houses; they require animal excreta, preferably cow dung.

See **Stable Flies** pamphlet for more specific information on stable flies.

## GETTING RID OF FLIES

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Insecticides are not the only way to control flies. Spraying and swatting will control them – but if they keep on breeding, there are always more flies to replace those killed. Screens on doors and windows will help to keep flies out. It is best to *prevent* them breeding in the first place.

## HINTS TO PREVENT FLIES BREEDING

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1. Ensure rubbish and compost bins have tight fitting lids and keep them clean and closed at all times.
2. Wrap rubbish (particularly food scraps) tightly and dispose of it only in the bin.
3. Keep your barbecue free of food scraps.
4. Don't leave uneaten pet food lying about.
5. If you keep pets of any kind, keep their yards and cages clean and free of excreta at all times.
6. Compost lawn clippings. Don't leave it in heaps.
7. Apply manure thinly to your garden and dig it in.

**Fly traps** can be used to trap and kill flies and are effective due to the social nature of flies. Once a few flies are trapped, others will be attracted. Fly traps are available commercially through outlets such as hardware stores, or can be made quite cheaply from everyday household items.

*If you have further questions on this information sheet, please contact the City of Wanneroo's Health Services on 9405 5444, or visit <http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/programs/hort/flybreeding/>*