Cluster Flies

Typical Location When Observed: In homes from late September through April. This is the most common indoor fly of buildings during the cool months.

Geographic Location: Potentially statewide where earthworms are present. Most severe infestations occur in higher elevation communities.

Importance/Damage: Nuisance pest within homes

Distinguishing Features: General color is grayish-brown and it is typical house fly size (6-9 mm). Golden tangled hairs on the prothorax are useful for identifying cluster flies. (Note: These hairs readily rub off and may be largely absent in poorly handled samples.)

Look-Alikes: Some other blow flies (Phormia regina, Calliphora species) will winter in the adult stage and sometimes occur in homes during the winter months. These flies lack the golden hairs on the thorax that characterize cluster flies.

General Life History and Habits: Cluster flies develop as a parasite of earthworms. They are not associated with garbage, carrion or other foods typically associated with blow flies.

Resources: This insect is also mentioned in Extension Fact Sheet 5.502, *Flies in the Home.*

Scientific Name: *Pollenia* species
Order: Diptera (True Flies)
Family: Calliphoridae (Blow Flies)