

Field Guide to Flies

Know your enemy. Read up on the pests that might be bugging your horse this summer.

By Holly Werner

July 2009 Exclusive

[Click for larger image](#)

DEER FLY/HORSEFLY:

Similar in shape and appearance to the common house fly, horse flies are larger (approximately 1 1/8" long for adults). Deer flies are 1/4" to 1/2" smaller than horse flies, and usually have patterned wings. They may be black, gray or brown in color. Larvae proliferate in water or moist soil. Winged adults emerge in early summer. Adults live only a few days, and eggs are laid on aquatic plants just above water level. Powerful fliers that can travel many miles from breeding sites to find meals. Female deer and horseflies feed on blood from large mammals (although males do not).

[Click for larger image](#) HOUSE FLY: Known scientifically as *Musca domestica*, the most common fly found inside homes. About 1/4" long and gray with black stripes on the thorax. No chewing mouthparts, just "sponging" mouthpart for absorbing fluids, such as tears and wound secretions. Breed and produce maggots in moist organic material, such as manure. Found year-round, inside and outside, as long as temperatures are warm. Does not bite.

[Click for larger image](#) STABLE FLY: Resembles the house fly, but with piercing mouthpart to suck blood. Both males and females attack animals around the flanks and below the knees, causing them to stomp or kick. After feeding, flies retreat to fences or other surfaces to digest their meals. Eggs are laid in moist organic matter, such as wet manure or urine-soaked, fermenting straw, hay or feed. Life cycle completed in 21-25 days during warm weather.

[Click for larger image](#) HORN FLY: Small, about 3/16", and dark gray. Feed by sucking blood from horses and cattle throughout the day, resting continuously on the animal's shoulders and back. Females lay eggs in fresh cow manure piles. Life cycle completed in 10-14 days. For information on reducing fly-breeding sites in your region, see "National Defense" in the July 2009 issue of *Horse Illustrated*.