



Wingless Soldier Fly

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Wingless Soldier Fly, *Boreoides subulatus*.

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Boreoides subulatus Hardy, Wingless Soldier Fly

General Description

Body brown (male) or grey (female). No wings on females. Body up to 2 cm long.

Biology

Female Wingless Soldier Flies are seen on walls and fences, laying masses of long white eggs. Larvae live in damp soil or rotting vegetation, especially in or near compost.

Distribution

South-eastern mainland Australia.

Habitat

Gardens.

Common Name Wingless Soldier Fly

Soldier Fly Identification

Soldier flies are large (12mm long). The coloration varies among species. The Soldier Fly thorax is usually black above, yellow to yellowish green on the sides. The adult black soldier flies have black wings, held over the back when at rest. Others vary in color from metallic blue to green and purple or black and yellow patterns. They have characteristic "elbowed" antennae due to a long terminal segment. In many situations involving this fly, only the larvae or pupae are found.



The key to soldier fly identification is the presence of its distinctive larvae

Larvae are dark brown, torpedo-shaped and flattened. The larva grows to over one inch in length.

The larvae and pupae of the soldier fly are distinctive in appearance, and is a key in identifying this type of fly. **This larvae (maggot) is usually seen under or around dumpsters, garbage cans or compost piles.**



Black soldier fly larvae,
Photo by G. McIlveen, Jr.

The organic material in which the Soldier Fly breeds is always damp and usually in an advanced stage of decomposition. The pupa is also flattened and dark brown. Inside breeding sources usually occur in large buildings where the dumpster is located inside in a loading dock area.

Look for larvae and pupae along walls and the edge of the dumpster. Because the size of the larvae and pupae is so large, it is easy to identify. Sanitation of the dumpster would be an important step in the control of these flies. Clean up organic debris found around, in and under the dumpster. The Soldier flies encountered in and around homes usually breed and feed in damp organic material associated with poorly maintained dumpsters.

Soldier Fly Inspection

When Soldier Flies are found in a building, it is usually the direct result of a nearby dumpster or other such garbage receptacle. Inspect dumpsters, compost piles and garbage cans; the peculiar larvae and pupae will be found under or around dumpsters. The younger maggots will be buried in a compost pile or damp organic material and are more difficult to locate. It is during the last instar that the maggots crawl to visible areas to pupate. The organic material in which the Soldier Fly breeds is always damp and usually in an advanced stage of decomposition. Some Soldier Flies are aquatic, depositing their eggs at the edge of water; these are not the species normally found infesting homes or other structures.

Soldier Fly Control

Sanitation & Chemical Control

Sanitation is the first level of defense, even though there are various traps and sprays that are used to kill flies, it is necessary to remove the source in order to eliminate them.

Whenever possible, food and materials on which the flies can lay their eggs must be removed, destroyed, as a breeding medium, or isolated from the egg-laying adult. Killing adult flies will reduce infestation, but elimination of breeding areas is necessary for good management.

A pyrethrum space spray such as Pyrethrum Aerosol can be used as a quick kill, reducing populations of flying insects.

Spraying dumpster surfaces will be of some help, but sanitation is ultimately required. The flies rest on the sprayed surface of the dumpster and pick up enough insecticide to kill them. When spraying the surfaces, it should be wet enough to the point of runoff, but not enough to form puddles.

Using a sanitation product will help clean dumpsters after garbage pick-up.

Spray any areas where the Soldier Flies would land upon and rest. Also spray possible entry points, such as around windows and doors.

Exopest Control