

Cluster flies



The cluster fly that causes problems in homes is **Pollenia rudis**.

It has an unusual life cycle. The adult female lays her eggs on the ground at the entrance to an earthworm burrow. When the eggs hatch, the larvae find the earthworm and develop within it as parasites. They leave the earthworm to become a pupa and then emerge as adults in late summer and early autumn.

Over winter, the flies tend to stay in one place, often in lofts of country houses or houses at the edges of towns. They are rarely a problem in inner-town areas.

They are frequently in groups of thousands, and they tend to return to the same place every winter. This is strange as it is a different generation each winter. The most likely explanation is that the flies spit on the walls and their saliva contains a 'pheromone' which the new flies can 'smell'.

Nuisance

Cluster flies start to become a nuisance in late autumn. They normally gather outside on light-coloured, south-facing walls that are warmed by the sun. Indoors they tend to collect on particular windows, in rooms that are not used often.

Cluster flies mainly feed on the nectar of wild flowers, and do not feed over winter, so they are unlikely to be a health risk.

Control

It is difficult to control cluster flies and it is something that goes with living in the countryside in the UK. Fly sprays are effective inside, but these can cause breathing difficulties for people with asthma or other breathing problems.



Outside walls can be sprayed, but this will affect all insects and birds that feed off them. These treatments only last for a short while and then the problem returns. Treatment is most effective if it is carried out in the winter by a professional pest controller.

You can use fly screens and chain curtains on your doors and windows to prevent the flies from coming into your home.



Where to get help

We no longer provide a pest-control service, but you can find a list of local accredited pest control contractors by using the directory on the British Pest Control Associations (BPCA) website at www.bpca.org.uk or phone **01332 294288**.

Or you can find a list of contractors in directories like the Yellow Pages, or by searching online.

Rochford District Council

Council Offices, South Street, Rochford,
Essex SS4 1BW

Phone: **01702 318111**

Email: customerservices@rochford.gov.uk

Website: [www.rochford.gov.uk/pest control](http://www.rochford.gov.uk/pest%20control)

If you would like this information in
large print, Braille or another
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01702 318111