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Moth fly

Clogmia albipunctata

LOW RISK

INDICATOR:
INVESTIGATE ENVIRONMENT

GENERAL INFORMATION

Clogmia albipunctata commonly known as the moth fly, drain fly, or filter fly is a long-antennae fly that falls under the larger order of flies and mosquitoes.

Adults live in dark and moist areas and can be frequently found in drains or sewers. Larvae live in and feed on decaying organic matter. The adults are harmless to humans but may carry bacteria and microorganisms from infestation sites.

SIGNS OF INFESTATION

An infestation will be indicated by the presence of a large number of adults. The adults are very poor flyers and are unable to travel far from their site of pupation unless carried by a strong airflow. Drains can be checked visually for infestation or by sealing openings with a clear or adhesive film and looking for captured adults. Adults may die quickly if in a dry area and can be found dead on the floor. Insect sticky traps will capture wandering adults.



DIAGNOSTIC MORPHOLOGY

Adults:

- 4 – 5 mm long with a short stout body
- Color ranges from brown to black; characteristic white spots at the tip of the wing veins
- Strongly veined wings are held back over the abdomen
- Both the body and wings are thickly haired



Immature Stage:

- 9.5 mm long, worm-like body
- body gray with dark eyes
- Legless

FOOD SOURCES

Larvae feed on a gelatinous film (slime) of decaying organic matter; a substance frequently built up in plumbing drain lines. Piles of wet leaves of other organic materials can work as an alternate food source. Adults feed on nectar and other liquid carbohydrates.

LIFE CYCLE

The life cycle begins when the female lays her eggs in a gelatinous mass on decaying organic matter. While the most common breeding sites are drains, any moist area with decaying organic matter has a potential for infestation. Adult females lay masses of 30 to 100 eggs. After 48 hours, the larvae hatch from the egg and feed on the surrounding detritus. The larval stage lasts 8 to 24 days and includes 4 instars. After a pupation stage of 5 days, the adult stage emerges and can last 3 to 21 days, depending on available food sources.

CONTROL & TREATMENT

Moth flies are an indicator that an open drain or other damp water source is available for reproduction. Sticky traps can be used to control adults and verify an infestation but will persist unless their breeding sites and food sources are eliminated. Any water sources in the immediate area should be checked and capped off if possible. If the drain must remain open other options include mechanical removal (i.e. scrubbing), sterilization by pouring boiling water down the drain, or by pouring glycerin or other nontoxic substance into the drain to act as a temporary barrier. Moth flies will also enter buildings through openings and doorways, if no open drains or over wet sources can be found, look for potential ingress points near adult locations. Rectifying any pooling water on the exterior of buildings can also aid in reducing moth fly populations.

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Fact Sheet: Moth Fly

Resources:

Yates, Mark. "Moth Flies." Pest Control 68.4 (2000): 77. MasterFILE Premier. Web. 16 Apr. 2014.

<https://insects.tamu.edu/extension/publications/epubs/e-184.cfm>

<http://www.doyourownpestcontrol.com/drainflies.htm>

Photo credit: Adult- Steven Bren. <http://bugguide.net/node/view/308138/bgimage>

Photo credit: Immature- Ashley Bradford. <http://bugguide.net/node/view/367167/bgimage>

Fact Sheet: Prepared by students of Buffalo State University of New York, Fine Art Conservation