

Horse Fly



GARDEN EARTH
NATURALIST
ECO-SERVICE CARDS

HORSE FLY

FAMILY: Tabanidae

ORDER: Diptera (means "two" wings)

IDENTIFICATION CLUES



- ◆ relatively large flies, 1/4 - 1 1/8 inch long
- ◆ gray, brown, or black; may have iridescent or metallic color patterns
- ◆ transparent wings with black or brown patterns
- ◆ large eyes, sometimes multi-colored
- ◆ females inflict a painful bite



Where to Look:

Common near water where the larvae live. They are often annoying pests around swimming pools and lakes.

What It Eats

and Females suck blood from large mammals. Males eat pollen and nectar. The larvae feed on aquatic insects and earthworms.



Life Cycle

COMPLETE
METAMORPHOSIS

Eggs are layed on plants above water. As the eggs hatch, the larvae fall into the water and overwinter in the mud.

In spring they form pupae and develop into adults.

Who Eats It?

Horse flies are eaten by birds, frogs and toads.

Role in the Ecosystem

Horseflies are an important part of the food chain. They also play a minor role in pollination.



Did You Know

The saliva of the common American Horsefly contains a chemical that keeps blood from clotting. After a bite, you may bleed for several minutes.