

## Lovebugs

Many of my topics are targeted towards a certain type of grass or condition that not everyone has a problem with. I believe everyone is familiar with this weeks topic, the love bug. The biggest flights of lovebugs occur in early September.

In case you have not seen one, they are small black flies with red thoraxes. The males are slightly smaller than the female and swarms of them usually occur twice a year. The first flight is in April or May, and the second flight is in August or September.

The flights last for about four to five weeks. If not hit by a car first, the adult females only live for about 2-3 days. Lovebugs usually don't become active until about 10:00 in the morning when the temperature starts to rise. At night they rest on leaves and plants.

Female lovebugs lay from 100-350 eggs which are deposited beneath decaying vegetation. The larvae, or immature form, feed on decaying plant material and actually help plants by turning the material into organic matter. After the larvae mature they transform into a pupae. The pupae then turn into the adult fly.

Lovebugs are a problem for people because they can infest certain areas, and they also splatter on cars. Lovebug entrails should be removed from your cars within a few days because if their remnants are left there, they are harder to remove and can cause damage to your paint.

If the problem is severe, you may want to apply a light coat of baby oil on your grill, hood, and windshield. Lovebugs also accumulate in the grills of automobiles which can cause them to overheat.

Most aerosols will control the adult lovebugs, but this is impractical because they cover such large areas and are ubiquitous. Aerosols may help in confined spaces such as a porch or windows, but aerosols will not eliminate them. Fans can be placed near entrance ways or windows where you may have a problem with them entering your home.

Lovebugs do have some natural predators such as birds, but the numbers are so great that birds cannot control all of them. Some beetles and other invertebrate, ground-dwelling predators feed on the larvae stages in decaying vegetation. Lovebugs seem to be very attracted to white objects.

If you have white objects near your home you may want to cover them or remove them. If you have a white house you are just out of luck unless you want to do some painting. Since there is no practical way to control lovebugs the best thing to do is just tolerate them until they leave.