

**FIVE FLYING PESTS MAKE LIFE MISERABLE THIS TIME OF
YEAR
06/27/00**

By the time you read this we will be one step closer to the end of the Plague of the Adirondacks.

I refer, of course, to the black fly. May and June are notorious for the torment they inflict on man and beast. Normally, they are pretty much on the wane by the middle of July, an assumption one old Adirondacker took exception to when he answered my query as to how long they persisted. He said, "When the first snow flies." That's not quite true, of course, it only seems that way.

If the black flies were the only torment, life would be tolerable because as pesky as they are, they give some respite indoors or at night. Remedies to discourage them and assuage the bites are an industry of considerable proportions. Testament to the adage: "It's an ill wind that doesn't blow some good."

Here are several ways to deal with black flies from those whose work or pursuits take them outdoors.

Repellents or fly dope, as we used to call it, works quite well if you have no aversion to their chemical properties. I built up an immunity to the stuff years ago and apply it liberally and often to every part of my anatomy not swathed in clothing.

Stay away from dark clothing because it most definitely attracts them. Socks that reach to your knees and special attention to cuff openings are points to remember. Nothing will drive home the lesson of how to deal with biting insects better than experience. Occasional combatants never really learn how to cope, but those who have to endure their onslaughts as a part of their occupation, do.

Unfortunately black flies are not the only biting flies we have to contend with. Mosquitoes, punkies, deer flies and stable flies round out the complement. They all have their special place in the outdoorsman's Hall of Torment.

Personally, the mosquitoes take top honors as the worst of a bad lot. Sure, they can overwhelm with sheer numbers, but a single one in your bedroom can be more annoying than hordes one is prepared for outdoors. Relentless in their quest, they boldly

announce their intentions with a piercing hum. Of the lot, they are by far the most dangerous and cause fatal consequences to both man and beast.

Punkies or gnats rival mosquitoes for indoor depredations. They inflict their damage in a manner and stealth that leaves the victim wondering what the problem is. Sitting in the evening by an open window with the light near by is a special invitation to lunch. They can fly through the openings in ordinary window screens in formation.

Deer flies are perhaps the most persistent, bedeviling the victim about the head and face as they jockey for an unprotected area for their painful bite. It is a bite that can be administered through tight-fitting clothing.

The biting flies about half the size and with the looks of the common housefly completes the cast. I have long been curious about their common name and a contemporary with the same interests as yours truly in trivial pursuits came up with the answer.

They are called “stable flies,” a much more flattering appellation than I have been known to refer to them as. Just yesterday a friend referred to them as “sock flies” because of their propensity to go for your ankles, a feat they accomplish very readily with socks being no impediment to their objective.

They surely must have the longest and sturdiest proboscises of the lot. If you do much fishing from a boat you will know what I mean. A fly swatter is a useful addition to your boating gear.

All five pests belong to the same order of two-winged flies known as *Diptera*. Worldwide, they number 86,000 species with 16,130 residing in North America.

Think of the inestimable numbers this represents and what they would be if it were not for the birds, animals and other insects that feed on them!