

Hairy Maggot Blow Fly, *Chrysomya rufifacies* (Macquart)¹

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Introduction

Insects in the family Calliphoridae are generally referred to as "blow flies" or "bottle flies". Blow flies can be found in almost every known terrestrial habitat, and they are found in association with human civilization throughout the world. In 1980 the immigrant species *Chrysomya rufifacies* was first recovered in the continental United States. This species is expected to increase its range in the United States.

Distribution

This species is now established in Southern California, Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. It is also found throughout Central America, Japan, India, and the remainder of the old world.

Description

Adults (Figure 1) are robust flies metallic green in color with a distinct blue hue when viewed under bright sunlit conditions. The posterior margin of the abdominal tergites are a brilliant blue.



Figure 1. Adult hairy maggot blow fly, *Chrysomya rufifacies* (Macquart) Credits: James Castner, University of Florida

The larvae is one of the "hairy maggots". They received this name because each body segment possesses a median row of fleshy tubercles which gives it a slightly hairy appearance although it does not possess any true hairs. The puparium is the hardened and shrunken outer skin of the mature maggot. The pupa develops entirely within this hardened shell which looks similar to a rat dropping or a cockroach egg case.

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Life Cycle

The fly life cycle passes through four life stages: egg, larva, pupa, adult. The eggs are approximately 1 mm long and are laid in a loose mass consisting of 50 to 200 eggs. Group oviposition by several females results in large masses of thousands of eggs that may completely cover a decomposing carcass. The eggs hatch in as little as eight hours (depending on air temperature) and the larvae feed on carrion until they reach maturity. Upon maturity, they migrate away from the carrion to search for a suitable pupation site. Pupation usually occurs within the first inch of topsoil or under leaf litter, rocks, or fallen limbs. During this time, the larval skin shrinks and hardens to form the puparium which is dark brown in color. This stage may last as long as 12 days; however, the adults can emerge in only seven to eight days depending on temperature. The adults can live up to six weeks.