

COMMON DRONE FLY

(*Eristalis tenax*)

Bug of the Month



While bees tend to garner much of the press when it comes to pollination, flies are also another important taxa of pollinators. Specifically, syrphid flies, also known as hover flies or flower flies, can be important pollinators. Some estimates suggest flies provide one-third of all pollination services. In addition to pollination, many immature syrphid flies are predators of pests such as aphids and scales.

The syrphid pictured here is the Common Drone Fly, or *Eristalis tenax*. While native to Europe, they are now found across North America, including Pennsylvania. They are bee mimics that visit a variety of flowers. Common Drone Flies actively fly from mid-March through mid-November. They are known to be migratory and are capable of overwintering as adults.

As larvae, they are known as rat-tailed maggots due to a long breathing tube that allows the larva to live in putrid water. The larvae serve as important recyclers in ponds, lagoons, tree holes, and other bodies of standing water.

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