

Beneficial Species Profile



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Common Name: Drain Flies / Moth Flies

Scientific Name: *Psychoda alternata*

Order and Family: Diptera ; Psychodidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	<1 mm	Small and transparent. Can be single or laid in masses.
Larva/Nymph	<10 mm	Resemble mosquito larvae; thin, white to creamy brown 11 segmented body with a distinctive head and mouthparts.
Adult	1.5-4 mm	Looks like a tiny moth. Mottled with short dense hair-scales along wing veins. Long antennae of 12-16 segments
Pupa (if applicable)		Yellow to brown. Respiratory trumpets on the head of the pupae, resembles horns.

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.):

Sucking/siphoning

Host/s:

A common household pest associated with shower and sink drains. Adults lay eggs in the sides of drains indoors where the larvae grow and feed on organic materials (algae, fungi, bacteria). Outdoors they grow in moist soils.

Also found in sewage installations, air conditioners, rain barrels, bird feeders, and public restrooms. Attracted to light and moisture.

Adults feed on polluted water and flower nectar.

Description of Benefits (predator, parasitoid, pollinator, etc.):

Larvae are utilized in industrial sewage treatment plants. They assist in purifying sewage.

Can be found on cadavers in shaded/moist areas. Usually the species does not inhabit remains; however, they can be associated with fecal matter associated with the decomposing process, thus contributing some information for PMI (postmortem interval) investigations.

Also associated with human myiasis (live tissue infestation).

References:

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