



Soldier Fly



Soldier Fly Larvae by Dorie Rose



Soldier Fly Adults by Dorie Rose

Soldier flies (*Diptera: Stratiomyidae*) are true flies that resemble wasps in their appearance and behavior. These flies do not bite or sting. Adult flies are often found on flowers and vary in color from black, metallic blue, green or purple, to brightly colored black and yellow patterns. You can tell that they are flies and not wasps because flies have just two wings, unlike wasps that have four wings. When at rest, the wings are folded scissor-like across their abdomens.



The larvae are very aggressive consumers in the worm bin. So much so that the passive worms may temporarily retreat to the lower parts of the bin until the soldier fly larvae have grown into adults and flown away. If your worms do retreat be sure you have food in the lower parts of your bin so they don't starve. The larvae change in color from off white, to light brown, to gray. Some describe them as big, ugly, segmented maggots. They have about 10 segments and are somewhat flat on the underside. One end is round and the other end comes to a slight point.

The larvae are found in large groups in the organic material, and can tolerate very hot conditions. When disturbed, they will retreat from the light, just as worms do.

Some folks raise these in the bins and use them as fishing bait. Others remove them by hand and feed them to the birds. We have heard of one worm farmer who placed her chicken in the bin to dine upon the tasty morsels and found this to be a very effective method of soldier fly larvae control. My concern is that the bird might find the worms and eat them as well.

Soldier fly larvae are harmless to you, your worms and your plants. They are very good decomposers and, if allowed to stay in your vermicomposting system, will help to recycle your waste. Just be sure that your worms get plenty to eat as well.

There are approximately 1,500 species of soldier flies worldwide.

WE DO NOT SELL BLACK SOLDIER FLY LARVAE

More Info:

Bug People Page about Soldier Fly:

http://www.bugpeople.org/taxa/Diptera/Stratiomyidae/Hermetia_illucens/Hermetia_illucensPage.htm

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