

Lovebugs

Lovebugs are small black flies with red thoraxes. Two flights of lovebugs occur each year. The spring flight occurs during late April and May. A second flight occurs during late August and September. Flights extend over periods of 4 to 5 weeks. Adult females live only 2-3 days.

Adult lovebugs are harmless and do not sting or bite. They feed on the nectar of various plants, especially sweet clover, goldenrod and brazilian pepper. Usually, lovebug flights are restricted to daylight hours and temperatures above 68 degrees Fahrenheit. At night lovebugs rest on low growing vegetation.

Lovebugs are a considerable nuisance to motorists. They congregate in unbelievable numbers along highways and insects spatter on the windshield and grills of moving trucks and automobiles. Windshields become covered with the fatty remains, and vision is obscured. The fatty tissue will cause pitting of the car's finish if it is not removed within a few days.

A number of insecticides have been evaluated for effectiveness in controlling lovebug larva and adults. Most of them kill lovebugs but are impractical because high population of the insects occur over vast areas of the state.

There are several things that can be done to lessen the problem facing motorists. By traveling at night motorists can avoid the insects; lovebugs reach peak activity at 10:00 am and stop flying at dusk. Traveling at slower speed will reduce the number of insect that will spatter. When lovebugs are numerous, some motorists spread a light film of baby oil over the front of the hood, above the windshield and on the grill and bumpers. This practice will make their removal a simpler task. Spattered bugs should be washed off the car as soon as possible. Lovebugs are easily removed, and the chance of damaging the car's finish is lessened if the car has been waxed recently.