

Harrogate North Phorid Fly Study

UPDATE JUNE 3, 2017

At the direction of the Board, a team of community residents consisting of Bill Ferguson, Hank Lloyd, Joe Miscione, Pete Mrozinski, Dennis Shiley, and Susan Herr (the "Vetting Team") has been tasked with studying the phorid fly problem within the community.

The Vetting Team set up a hypothesis that hopes to show that treating the exterior of certain homes within the community with a long residual insecticide will greatly reduce the number of phorid flies within that home as compared with non-treated homes. Twenty-nine homeowners throughout the Harrogate community have volunteered to be part of this study. Sixteen homes will be treated with an insecticide spray aimed at any possible opening in the exterior by which phorid flies might enter a home. The residual period of the spray is expected to be approximately four to five weeks. Thirteen homes will be the control, or non-treated, homes. Resident volunteers will use fly lights to gather data on the number of flies trapped before and after treatment. We will compare the numbers and see if our hypothesis is borne out by the data. If the insecticide proves to be successful, the control homes will have the opportunity to be sprayed with the insecticide.

The Vetting Team has been monitoring the presence of phorid flies. During the past two years, the flies have been present in large numbers in mid-summer to late fall. The Team is monitoring fly activity and when the number increase sufficiently to tell if an insecticide spray is making a difference, the treatment study will begin.

Meanwhile, the Vetting Team has been taking soil samples from various locations throughout the community. The intention of the soil sample study is to see if phorid flies are breeding in the soil or mulch around the community. Each member of the team is taking about six samples for a total of thirty-six samples. Each sample is contained in a glass Mason jar labeled with the location and date of collection. Inserted in the jar is a piece of yellow fly paper to collect any insects which may emerge. The team members will monitor the jars and record the type and number of any insects which emerge from the soil.

Air samples are also being taken to see what locations within the community seem to have the most phorid flies in the air and potentially from what direction they are coming.

Through the Board, all information gathered will be shared with the community and with a research team at Penn State.