

## Bluebottles and Greenbottles

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Left: *Melinda viridicyanea*, Right: *Neomyia viridescens*

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Certain well-built flies from the Muscidae (house flies and allies) and Calliphoridae (blow flies) are loosely described as bluebottles or greenbottles. There are a few similar flies from other families that are sometimes included in this category. Regarded with suspicion by the general public, because several are associated with decomposition and disease, they are nonetheless amongst the most beautiful of our insects. Workers in Wyre have so far identified 10 species. Some of these are known to be responsible for transmission of disease and also have forensic significance with regard to man. Others have reduced contact with humans and their larvae develop in animal dung, an example being the muscid fly *Neomyia viridescens* (above right) which appears on cattle pasture here. The choice of such substrates lays the larvae open to the effects of any veterinary treatments farm livestock may have received, as remnants of the chemicals can remain in the dung. Studies have suggested that certain residues do have an adverse effect on reproductive potential of flies such as *Neomyia* (1). Much remains to be discovered and given the importance of uncontaminated invertebrates in the wildlife food chain, it is vital that potential threats to the continuing

healthy abundance of creatures relatively harmless to man are fully investigated. It is probable that the dung of deer and other larger mammals in the Forest is not (yet) contaminated in ways previously mentioned may serve as a valuable survival resource for a number of different insects with specialised or sensitive lifestyles.

Some bluebottles have a scattered presence throughout the Forest and are more specific in their targets. The Calliphorid *Melinda viridicyanea* (above left) has a distinct preference for the small and common snail *Discus rotundatus* at the larval stage. At a first glance, it seems that this species could not be at risk from any contamination by chemicals such as those mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

### Reference

Jane Gover and Les Strong (1997). Mating combinations of control and ivermectin-fed dung flies *Neomyia cornicina* (Diptera: Muscidae): effects on mating behaviour, oviposition and ovarian development. Bulletin of Entomological Research, 87, pp 37-44.

Note: *Neomyia cornicina* is now *N. viridescens*.