

Rat-Tailed Maggots

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Rat-tailed maggots are grub-like, brownish, with bodies about ½ inch long, and a tail-like breathing tube. Rat-tailed maggots live in wet situations, frequently in liquid manures, but also in other stagnant, polluted conditions. The adult stage is a fly, which resembles a bee and is called a syrphid or hover fly. These flies are useful in pollination.

If eggs or maggots are swallowed, they can cause intestinal problems. This factor should be considered when, for example, the maggots or eggs are found in liquid manure, which is intended for use around edible plants, as in a garden.

Avoiding or eliminating wet, polluted, or unsanitary situations will help avoid or manage rat-tailed maggots. If the maggots are already present in liquid manure to be used around edible plants, the manure could be used elsewhere (and where children will not contact it). If its use is still desired in the garden, thoroughly wash all produce taken from the garden.



Fig. 1. Rat-tailed maggots. Body length = 18 mm. By A.L. Antonelli.