

March Flies

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March flies (Fig. 1 & 2) are commonly seen flying in large numbers when the weather becomes warmer in late winter or early spring. March flies measure about 3/8 of an inch in length. They appear somewhat fuzzy and generally dark in color. They are feeble fliers and likely to land anywhere. The adult stage of some species feeds on nectar and thus may help with pollination. March flies can be strongly attracted to the sticky flower buds of certain Rhododendrons. They frequently congregate there in large numbers, become hopelessly trapped, and eventually expire. The larval (maggot) stage feeds on decaying organic matter and on roots of certain plants. March fly larvae (Fig. 3), sometimes misidentified as European crane fly larvae, may abundantly inhabit lawns or grassy areas bearing a rich accumulation of organic debris. The larvae are spiny; unlike crane fly, they have an obvious head capsula. Regardless, March flies are not known to be serious pests in our area.



Fig. 1. A male March fly, *Bibio albipennis* Say.
Note the rather large eyes. By K. Grey.



Fig. 2. A female March fly, *Bibio albipennis* Say.
Note the smaller head and eyes. By K. Grey.



Fig. 3. A March fly larva. By K. Grey.