

# SYRPHID FLIES

One of the many colorful and common little flies in Florida is *Allograpta obliqua*, known as a hover fly, flower fly, or syrphid fly. No matter what they are called, these flies are important predators. The adult syrphid fly can commonly be found in the garden. Adults look like bees, but they have only **one** pair of wings. You can usually find them hovering in one spot.

These flies are expert fliers and can hover or fly backward, abilities possessed by few other insects. Adults often visit flowers for nectar. Adults may also be seen around aphid colonies where, prior to laying her eggs, the female syrphid fly feeds on honeydew secreted by the aphids.

Adult syrphid flies are considered to be important in the cross-pollination of some plants. The larvae are important predators, feeding primarily on aphids. Syrphid fly eggs are laid singly on the surface of a leaf or twig that bears aphids. When larval populations are high, syrphid flies may kill 70 to 100% of an aphid population. Larvae are greenish-brown and look like small shapeless bits of slime. In addition, unlike caterpillars, syrphid fly larvae have no legs, which is a great clue for identifying these helpful insects. Try turning over an aphid-infested leaf in your yard to see if you can identify these important garden predators!



SIZE                      LARVA  
|-----|  
Up to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch



SIZE                      ADULT  
|-----|  
Up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch

Information from UF featured creatures website at

<http://www.entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/>

Pictures from: [www.sacstormwater.org/wise/bugs/SyrphidFly.html](http://www.sacstormwater.org/wise/bugs/SyrphidFly.html)

[www.ento.vt.edu/~kok/Biological\\_Control/PP\\_thumbz.htm](http://www.ento.vt.edu/~kok/Biological_Control/PP_thumbz.htm)