# FUNGUS GNATS AND SHORE FLIES

## (*Bradysia* spp.) and (*Scatella* spp.)

Alberta Environment Centre

Fungus Gnat Larvae

Dark Winged Fungus Gnat

### Description

Fungus gnats are small delicate dark grey or black flies, about 3 mm long. They are often seen running on the soil surface or flying around potted plants, especially in wet areas. The slender white larvae have shiny black heads and live in the soil or rooting media. Most species feed on decaying organic matter and algae and are common in manure and compost. Larvae occasionally feed on roots of seedlings, rooted cuttings and young plants, resulting in loss of plant vigour and yellowing and wilting of the leaves.

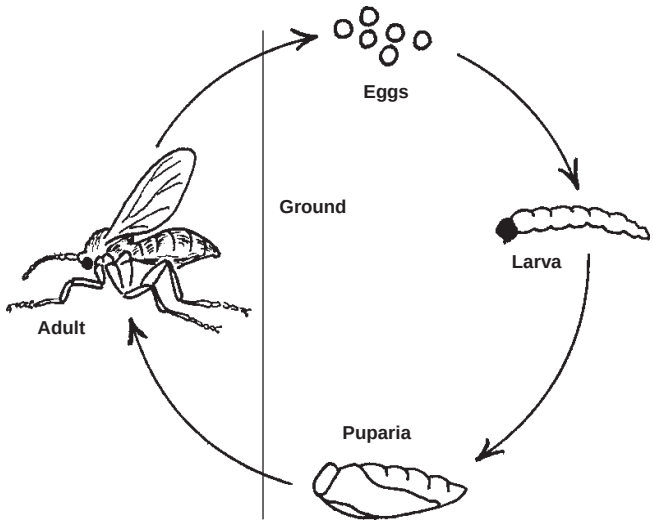
Shore flies are similar in appearance to fungus gnats but they do not inflict root damage. They may, however, contribute to the spread of diseases. Adult shore flies can be distinguished from fungus gnats by their apparent lack of antennae. They are also stouter and are stronger fliers than fungus gnats. Shore fly larvae develop in standing water and lack the distinctive black head of fungus gnat larvae.

### Fungus Gnat Life Cycle

The female lives about one week, laying a hundred or more eggs. The tiny white eggs are laid singly or in groups in the soil surface near host plants, hatching in four to six days. Mature larvae are about 5.5 mm long with shiny black head capsules and white transparent bodies. They only feed for about ten days before pupating, transforming into adults after one week. Many overlapping generations occur throughout the year.

Prevention includes providing good drainage under the greenhouse, avoiding overwatering, reducing algae slime, and practicing strict sanitation. Sticky cards may be set up to monitor populations.

### Fungus Gnat Life Cycle (22–40 days)




### Hosts

They are not host specific.

**Distinguishing Characteristics of Fungus Gnats and Shore Flies**