Keeping flies and their maggots away

During hot weather, you may find that flies are attracted to your boxes and wheeled bins. Female flies will lay eggs on any organic matter that will provide a source of food for them when they emerge as larvae or maggots. There are some simple steps you can take to keep flies and foul smells at bay.

Understanding the life cycle of the fly

The life cycle of the common housefly has four stages: egg, larva (maggot), pupa and adult fly. Adult female flies will lay their egg on any organic material that will provide suitable food for the maggots when they emerge. Each female fly can lay up to 500 eggs in batches of 75 to 100 in three to four days and in the summer, during warm weather, these eggs can hatch into maggots within eight to 20 hours. The fly can complete the whole cycle in as little as seven days and as many as 12 generations may occur in one summer.

How to avoid attracting flies:

- Don’t leave uncovered food, food waste and dirty food containers lying around the kitchen or barbeque, as it will attract flies and wasps which may then lay eggs on the food waste before it is placed in the bin.
- Keep your kitchen food caddy lid closed. Line it with a paper liner, newspaper, kitchen paper or paper bags to keep the contents together. You can buy compostable paper caddy liners from most supermarkets and online.
- Squeeze the air out of the liners or newspaper used to contain the food waste before it is placed in the green wheeled bin. The lack of air should slow down general decomposition, reduce smells and slow the development of maggots.
- Rinse food trays, yoghurt pots and other food packaging before placing them in your black wheeled bin. This can be done in the last of your washing up water or as part of your dishwasher load. It will stop smells and odour, which could attract flies.
- If possible try to keep the green wheeled bin in shady areas out of direct sunlight as the sun will warm up the contents, increasing any smells from food waste and attracting flies.
- Make sure that the lid of your green wheeled bin is closed. Don’t over fill the bins so that the lids won’t close properly.
- All garden waste should be placed regularly in the green wheeled bin.
- Put disposable nappies in nappy bags or consider using cotton reusable nappies instead.
- Hang an insecticidal strip inside your bin.
• Some essential oils, such as citronella and tea tree oil are natural insect repellents. Try smearing your bin lid with one of these oils to deter flies.

• Place newspaper in the bottom of your bin after it has been emptied to soak up any residue from your waste.

• Rinse your bin out regularly and keep it clean.

And finally… if you do get maggots:

• Most of the maggots will be removed when your bin is emptied.

• Maggots and fly eggs can be killed by pouring boiling water over them, sprinkling them with salt, or spraying them with furniture polish or fly killer. It helps to wash your bin out after it has been emptied. Please be careful when using hot water and make sure that any water is emptied out of the bin before you put your rubbish in it.

• After the bin has been emptied clean and disinfect it thoroughly.

• You may like to spray your bin with fly killer.

• Maggots found in a wheeled bin will not cause any health problems.

• There are companies that specialise in cleaning bins – to find out more look in the Yellow Pages under Cleaning and Maintenance.