

LOVE is In the AIR

Joe Tomasiello, ACE
Associate Certified Entomologist

If you've lived in Florida for more than several months, you're probably familiar with the signs of the impending swarm. One or two little black bugs floating in on a breeze. They can only mean one thing – lovebug season is upon us!

A member of the fly family, lovebugs are found along the Gulf Coast of the United States. They were observed as early as 1911 in Louisiana and were found throughout most of Florida by 1970. Contrary to the popular urban legend, lovebugs are a naturally-occurring insect and were *not* created in a lab and accidentally released.

These flirtatious flies are unique in that they choose a single mate and fly while coupled. The female will die a few days after laying her eggs, leaving the next generation behind to repeat the cycle. Swarms usually occur in May and September and typically last about five weeks.



Lovebugs are not a genetically engineered species created by Florida State University.



But while they don't sting or infest homes, the sheer volume in which they swarm makes them a rather unlovable visitor. And, since the females are attracted to vehicle exhaust, they present a particular problem for motorists on busy highways.

Each season, millions of lovebugs flock to highways, bespeckling the grills of vehicles by the thousands. Due to the acidic nature of their body chemistry, their remains may damage the vehicle finishes. Fortunately, experts report that in recent years, the intensity of these swarms has diminished.

While these affectionate insects aren't shown much love from the public, they do offer ecological benefits. Lovebug larvae feed on decaying vegetation, effectively aiding in decomposition of dead plants. Adults feed on nectar during their mating flights, making them valuable contributors as pollinators.

Lovebugs help local plant life thrive by pollinating as they feed on nectar.



Deans Services offers a robust treatment plan for the overall health of your lawn, landscaping, and home, however, while our program may help eliminate a few stragglers, lovebug eradication isn't possible.

If you find one indoors, it will usually die off quickly, and they can't infest your home. In fact, a gentle release outdoors can allow the lonely traveler to reunite with its mate. After all, as natural recyclers and pollinators they're doing good for the environment...and that's something we should all love. 

