

Johannesburg's Fly Infestation, A Growing Concern

By Karibu Staff

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Johannesburg residents have been battling a severe fly infestation in recent weeks, with many people reporting swarms of flies in their homes, gardens, and public spaces. Karibu went around the Joburg CBD and spoke to people in the street and small business owners.

Honorine Wangum of Ibarri Owerri, on Goud Street, said that they have been struggling with an increased number of flies. Wangum sells fast food at her kiosk, she has an assistant.

“Yes, when its hot [we see a lot of flies] ... the place is unclean, there is water [logged].”

Asked how they manage the fly outbreak, she said, “We pay extra to keep the place clean for us. Each shop around here contributes R30.00 for [cleaning] services.” The weekly small fee is paid to a guy who keeps the vicinity clean by sweeping and removing garbage, even when the municipality waste management service is active in the area.

Malusi Mabaso (27) working on Claim Street, Joburg, complained about a dysfunctional storm drain nearby. In his home, also in the CBD, he said he began noticing fruit flies although there is no decaying fruit in the house.

“Joburg CBD is crowded and filthy, even after cleaning, after an hour you can see the difference. There are not enough bins.”

Although residents thought the flies are produced by the poorly collected waste in town, experts are also pointing to climate reasons as a catalyst. Speaking on ENCA Genevieve Theron, entomologist – Agricultural Council Of South Africa said, warmer weather is causing the flies to breed rapidly. She emphasised that, “Flies are attracted to food, and by food, I mean their food, so that's organic waste, that's food waste, that's all sorts of waste, and when that waste is left accessible to them, it helps them to breed.”

The fly outbreak is a concern. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that houseflies can contaminate food and surfaces. They can spread at least 65 diseases. These diseases include diarrheal diseases, skin infections, and eye infections.

To combat the fly infestation, residents must eliminate breeding sites and prevent flies from entering their homes. One best way to do this is by ensuring proper waste disposal. This means dustbins should be closed properly and disposed of far from houses. Pet owners should also clean up after their pets, as pet waste can attract flies.

In addition to proper waste disposal, people should regularly clean, making sure no water stands still or dishes that are not washed because those will attract flies. It is also important to disinfect or use water and soap to wipe out areas where food is prepared or consumed.

There are several natural ways to repel flies to keep them away from your house.

The vinegar hack

Vinegar acts as a fly repellent, and the smell of boiling vinegar is particularly effective at keeping them away. Pour some malt vinegar into a pot or pan, bring it to a boil, and the flies will soon try to flee. Watch the pot closely to prevent the vinegar from burning and take care not to spill or splash it on yourself.

Use Mother Nature to repel flies

Flies avoid certain plants like mint. Place a mint pot near doors, windows, or on kitchen counters to deter them.

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