

Flies in the Chicken Coop Need to Go!



I was just about to pat myself on the back for keeping such a clean chicken coop, when I noticed a huge uptick in the number of flies in the chicken coop. The summer was extremely hot and muggy even for our area. I wonder if the extreme heat was causing the flies to lie low. I do not know that of course, I have no background in entomology or degrees in fly behavior. However, the moment I noticed a change in the fly population was after we had a brief cool down. The weather dried out for a few days and the heat lowered to more agreeable summer temperatures. And the flies in the chicken coop seemed to swoop in like an invading army.



The Flies Were EVERYWHERE

I saw them on everything and everywhere. Nothing had changed in [my cleaning routine](#). My routine is to cleanup all the chicken poop on under the roosts each morning. The wooden deck the chickens have outside the coop door was cleaned too. I even cleaned up chicken poop and duck poop in the free range area. The rabbit habitat has been kept clean too, with any moisture and food spillage cleaned up. So what was I going to do with this invasion of common flies? The first thing I did was examine my strategy. Was I really cleaning up all the chicken poop I could see? Was I leaving too much extra chicken food around to attract the flies? Could I keep the area dry with our frequent summer thunderstorms? I tried harder but still the flies were everywhere.



Using DE Powder to Control Flies in the Chicken Coop

DE powder is a short form of saying Diatomaceous Earth. You want to use the food grade form of DE powder. It is safe for chickens and has some benefits in the fight against intestinal worms and parasites. Care should be used when applying it in the coop or around the chickens as it can irritate breathing passages. The best way to dispense the powder is to shoo the chickens out of the coop while you dust the roost bars, under the nesting material, and anywhere there is a residual

dampness or manure stain. Protect your face from the powder. It can irritate our noses and eyes too. DE powder is a desiccant and works by drying the insects that eat it. It also makes the manure remnants dry and therefore less smelly. Less smelly means less attraction to the flies in the chicken coop.



Keeping Everything Dry

Keep the shavings dry. Any water spilled is going to cause odor which will attract more flies to the chicken coop. The summer droppings from your chickens are wetter than at other times of the year. The flock is drinking more water to stay

hydrated and cool. These wetter droppings are pretty much screaming to the flies to come into the chicken coop and hang out. Use a rake, small shovel (I use a garden trowel and a dustpan), kitty litter scoop, or whatever works for you, to remove as much manure first thing in the morning. Really this only takes a few minutes of time. Once it becomes part of your routine, you will notice a big difference in how frequently you need to clean the coop. Doing just a small cleanup every day, lowers the need for a complete clean out of the coop.



keeping the chicken manure cleaned up is a good first step to a fly free coop. After cleaning up the droppings, I sprinkle a light

layer of DE powder on areas that had droppings . This helps make the coop less inviting to flies

Other Ways to Deter Flies in the Chicken Coop

Using homemade sprays of essential oils, vinegar and water might repel flies temporarily. Some oils to choose would include Tea Tree, Lavender, Mint and Basil. Here is a link to a [recipe using the tea tree oil](#), to make a fly repellent spray. These same oils in the fresh herb form will help too.

A couple times a week I cut bunches of herbs from the garden and tuck the fresh herbs under the nesting material. Buying [premixed herb nesting material](#) is another option. Not only do these fragrances smell good to us, the pests do not like them. You can read more about herbs for hens in [this post](#).



Vanilla is Not Just an Ice Cream Flavor

Flies do not like vanilla scent. Soaking cotton balls in vanilla and placing them around the coop will help deter flies in the chicken coop. Put the cotton balls into something that

keeps the chickens from pecking at the cotton balls. Punching holes in the top of a mason jar lid and putting the cotton balls in the jar is one idea to use. More [herbal fly repellents](#) can be found here.

Store Bought Fly Control Products

Fly Strips and Fly Traps are available for purchase at most garden centers and feed stores. Store any commercial fly repellent products out of reach of children and away from animals. I have seen the fly strips collect hundreds of flies in the chicken coop. There have been times when these fly strips get stuck to my hair and clothing if I accidentally brush by one too closely. And, if they fall down and a chicken steps on it, the glue will hold fast to the chickens foot. Just some little cautions to be aware of in real life application.

Why You Should Control Flies

Controlling flies in the chicken coop is important for health and hygiene. Any chicken with a small wound, or a poopy butt is fair game for a nasty case of [fly strike](#), too. Not only chickens, but rabbits and other livestock can be attacked by flies if an open wound or poopy butt is present. Fly strike is very unpleasant to deal with both for the animal or chicken and for the caretaker. You will need to clean the fly larvae from the wound or what ever area the flies attacked. Keeping the area clean takes time, too. Good management against flies is your best defense against fly strike. Below is a photo of a poop crusted feather area at the back end of a chicken. This is a prime area for flies to decide to lay their eggs.



Good sanitary conditions are important and necessary for raising healthy animals and poultry. It does take effort to control flies in the chicken coop. Are you fighting a battle with flies this summer? How are you combating flies?

Getting Rid of Annoying

FLIES

In the Chicken Coop



What was I going to do with this invasion of common flies? The first thing I did was examine my strategy. Was I really cleaning up all the chicken poop I could see? Was I leaving too much extra chicken food around to attract the flies? Could I keep the area dry with our frequent summer thunderstorms? I tried harder but still the flies were everywhere.

