

TRANSVERSE-BANDED FLOWER FLY

Eristalis transversa

Bug
of the
Month



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The transverse flower fly is a common native hover fly found across much of eastern and central North America.

Adults may be seen from spring through fall, visiting gardens, meadows, roadsides and other sites with abundant flowers.

Like many hover flies, *E. transversa* looks like a bee or wasp but cannot sting. The species is recognized by its two-toned thorax: the front half is gray while the rear half is black. A bright yellow shield-like plate, called the scutellum, sits behind the thorax and is especially

vivid when compared against related species. Yellow bands and patches cross the abdomen, giving the 'transverse' flower fly its name.

Adults feed on nectar and pollen, and may transport pollen among flowers as they forage. They are also skilled fliers, capable of hovering, almost motionlessly, before darting away. Although larvae of *Eristalis* spp. develop in wet, organically rich habitats and possess a long breathing tube, the larval biology of *E. transversa* itself remains poorly documented, leaving

part of this familiar fly's life cycle still to be discovered.

By Natalie Boyle

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