

Fungus Gnats



Fungus gnats live in the moist soil, decaying plant material and fungus that can build up around houseplants, so their presence usually indicates over-watering, drainage problems or water leaks. The best prevention is usually just good maintenance. Make sure you allow the soil to dry out a little between watering and clean up all dead plant material and debris. Also, taking your plants outside during the summer months can attract gnats. Check your plants before bringing them back inside.

Adult fungus gnats only live between seven and ten days. During that time, female gnats fly around laying batches of eggs in the cracks of moist soil. They can lay up to 30 batches of 300 eggs during their short lifespans. In about 4 to 6 days the eggs will hatch and the larvae will begin feeding on any organic matter they can find for about two weeks, including the tender roots of your houseplants. Fungus gnats birth mostly females, which makes for mass populations ready to multiply again



Controlling fungus gnats is all about breaking their life cycle.

It's not enough to kill the adult gnats; you have to kill the larvae, too. Adult gnats are pretty harmless, but very annoying. Use **Sticky White Fly Traps** to control them. Keep an eye on the traps and replace them when they're full. You can also spray them with pyrethrin sprays; anything labeled for "flying insects" or "gnats." And try covering the top of your soil with ½ inch layer of sand. This will deter any gnats from laying their eggs there.



While you're taking care of the adult gnats, you'll also have to kill the larvae. If you don't have a very big infestation, try placing slices of potato (1½" square) on the surface of the soil. This will attract the larvae and keep them away from the roots of your plants. Leave them there for a few days, while the larvae eat underneath. After about two days, throw the potatoes away. For a larger problem, use a systemic insecticide like **Bonide Systemic Houseplant**. The systemic is absorbed into the plant through the roots. It will kill any insects that try to eat any part of the plant.