

High-protein poultry feed from thin air

Lots of flies around? Collect some kitchen slops -- cooking water and juices and leftovers from meat and fish dishes, some milk: anything that will go really putrid if you leave it for awhile. Then leave it for awhile. When it stinks really badly, gather some compost materials, say 4-5 cubic feet, spread it out in the sun, and sprinkle it with the putrid kitchen liquids. Don't get it too wet -- slightly more wet than compost should be.

In no time it'll be buzzing with flies. Leave it until you're quite sure lots of flies have had ample opportunity to lay their fill of eggs. Then scoop it all up, put it in a double garbage bag (one inside the other), put the bag in a suitably sized cardboard box, and close the bag lightly. It will soon stop smelling. Check it every day.

After a week or so, you'll open it to find the surface flat, finely divided, and writhing slightly, or even considerably, with maggots, lots and lots of maggots. Now's the time, don't leave them to turn into flies. Two options:

Option 1

Sift it with a circular gardener's sieve with a 3/16" mesh (stainless steel mesh is best). This will leave you with a pile of nice black compost and a sieve full of maggots -- first-class poultry feed. Your chickens, ducks, guinea fowl will think it's Christmas. The geese, who're strict vegetarians, will be appalled and disgusted by the whole thing, but never mind. Add the siftings to the compost bin or the worm bin. Maggots, by the way, assist rather than hinder the composting process. And, disgusting as they may look, fly maggots do not spread disease.

Option 2

Let the birds do the sifting for you -- but don't throw it onto their bedding or the mulch in their run because they'll miss a few maggots, leaving them to hatch into flies. On bare ground, they'll definitely get them all.

You've just wiped out a generation of flies.

Instead of using liquids, you can let a couple of litres of kitchen scraps get thoroughly putrid in a bucket with a lid on it and use that instead.