

## Discovering Diptera: Flies under the Microscope



**Epping Forest Field Centre is situated in the heart of Epping Forest. As a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the forest is nationally important for wildlife and offers a wide range of learning opportunities.**

### Course Description

Hoverflies, horseflies, houseflies, fruit flies, soldierflies, bee-flies, craneflies, greenbottles, mosquitoes and more: flies are all around us, but are often overlooked or even actively discouraged. In fact the true flies, or Diptera, are one of the most species-rich orders of insect in the UK, with over 7,000 species to choose from. They are found in all habitats and have fascinating life-histories and ecosystem roles.

This day course will provide an introduction to the Diptera, getting familiar with some of the major families and with a focus on some of the larger and more colourful species in the hoverfly, soldierfly, robberfly and related families. The course will be mostly based in the classroom, using microscopes and specimens to learn how to identify the different groups. We will also spend a short time outside searching for winter flies. This course is suitable for beginners with an interest in insects, as well as countryside professionals (but please note that we will be working with dead specimens, which are essential for identification in many cases).

### Course Objectives

By the end of the workshops participants will:

- Be able to recognise a number of distinctive fly families
- Have used keys to confirm family level identification and to go on to species identification
- Have had experience of field methods for finding flies
- Be familiar with some of the most frequently encountered species
- Have explored the benefits and limits of identifying hoverflies from photos

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- Know how to record flies to ensure information feeds in to the local and national recording schemes
- Know where to get further help

### **Course Schedule**

09.30 - Registration and refreshments at the Epping Forest Field Centre  
 09.45 - Introduction to the range of trees and shrubs to be covered and their non-leaf (and dead leaf) features.  
 10.30 - Identifying twigs from a range of trees and shrubs using AIDGAP keys.  
 12.00 - Pub lunch  
 13.00 - Visit to Roding Valley Arboretum  
 16.30 - Refreshments and discussion  
 17.00 - Course ends

### **About the Tutor**

Martin Harvey has worked in biological recording for over 15 years, with Wildlife Trusts, local records centres, the Open University's iSpot project and the national Biological Records Centre. He carries out entomological surveys for a range of organisation and, as a volunteer, runs two recording schemes. He is a qualified tutor, and has led workshops on wildlife identification and recording for various environmental bodies and wildlife groups.

### **What to Bring**

Essential: Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing

Optional (only if you have them already) : x10 or x20 hand lens, digital camera, collecting tubes, id keys, fly specimens

### **Catering Option**

Please bring a packed lunch; refreshments freely available all day for classroom sessions

### **Accessibility**

Moderate level of mobility required; majority of short field trip will in forest environment of uneven and sloping ground.

### **How to Book**

Online <http://www.field-studies-council.org/centres/eppingforest/leisurelearning.aspx>

By phone 020 8502 8500

### **Location address**

Epping Forest Field Centre, Pauls Nursery Road, High Beach, Loughton, Essex IG10 4AF

### **Disclaimer**

*All timings are approximate. This is an outline programme and may be subject to change according to the weather, requirements of the group or access restrictions to field sites on the day of the course*