Nasonia vitripennis: an Insect from Birds’ Nests
[Hymenoptera: Chalcidoidea: Pteromalidae]

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1 Introduction

Nasonia vitripennis (Walker 1836) is a world-wide distributed species which is much used for laboratory research. Most authors write that the species is a parasite of carrion and dung infesting flies. Only few have tried to capture *N. vitripennis* in the open. In contrast to much laboratory research on this species there is only little known about its biology under natural conditions. Of course the species is sometimes found in carrion and then often in great numbers. It proved impossible, however, to attract *N. vitripennis* with carrion or puparia of carrion infesting flies exposed on the ground. In dung the species is of little importance as a parasite of flies [Rutz & Axtell 1981] or is missing altogether. Sometimes the species was found in birds’ nests [Wylie 1958, Boucek 1964], where it lives in puparia of *Protocalliphora* spp. [Johnson 1929]. Surprising findings of *N. vitripennis* are those out of bark beetle holes [Pettersen 1976], where it lives on *Medetera* sp. (Dolichopodidae).

From all these observations the question arises whether *N. vitripennis* searches for hosts on the ground where carrion and dung mostly are to be expected, or whether it looks for hosts some meters above the ground, probably in birds’ nests.