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## A Fly

Okay, you are annoyingly poised to “take-out” one of the most bothersome of creatures: a fly. We can’t blame you. But their stories can show you that they have many benefits.

The common housefly lays its larva on decaying matter. These maggots are the tiny buzzards of the insect world, devouring the debris that would otherwise foul the planet.

Eerily enough their larva has been employed, since antiquity, by medical professionals to help to heal or clean difficult wounds. Today this therapy is known as biodebridement or biosurgery. Records show that Mayan Indians, Australian Aboriginals, American Civil War physicians, and modern medical professionals using flies for the healing of wounds.

Some flies play an important role in pollination. In the marshes of the Maurice River a broad-leafed plant called arrow arum or Tuckahoe is an abundant species. This spade-shaped plant is dependent on a fly for pollination. And in a relationship commonly referred to as mutualism the fly transmits a rust fungus to the plant. The fungus emits a floral scent that the fly feeds upon. The fungus provides a snack for the fly before the blossom opens. Thus the fly gets a meal and the plant gets pollinated.

Why care? Well the arrow arum is one of the plants with roots that hold the substrate of the marsh plain together in a mat. In turn the marsh protects the upland in times of high water events and absorbs storm water run off. The plant removes toxins from the waters that replenish our aquifer. Even heavy metals are transformed. The marsh protects prized upland from erosion.

Imagine that all this from one tiny uninvited guest ... a fly.