

## Your Local Medical Practices

### Phillip Island Medical Group

Cowes Clinic 5951 1800  
San Remo Clinic 5678 5402

### Wonthaggi Medical Group

Wonthaggi Clinic 5672 1333  
Inverloch Clinic 5674 1207

South Gippsland Family Medicine Clinic  
5672 4111

### Leongatha Healthcare

Leongatha Clinic 5662 2201  
Inverloch Clinic 5674 2700

Lang Lang Community Family Medicine  
5997 4141

Korumburra Medical Centre  
Korumburra Clinic 5655 1355

Boolarra Practice 5169 6688

### Foster Medical Centre

Foster Clinic 5682 2088  
Toora Clinic 5686 2203

Sarah Cannon Clinic— Foster 5682 2059

Yarram Medical Centre 5182 0333

Yarram Practice 5182 5533

### Mirboo North Medical Centre

5668 1234

Kooweerup Medical Centre 5997 1222



### General Practice Alliance South Gippsland

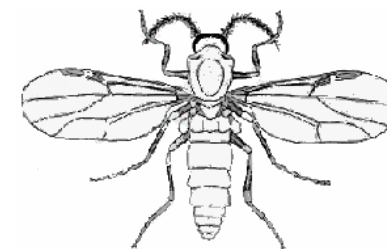
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General Practice Alliance South Gippsland has produced this pamphlet, as a community service. Written by Dr Tim Lowe with the assistance of entomologist Kaye Hergstrom.



## Sand flies Around South Gippsland



modified from: Kettle, D.S. (1995). Medical and Veterinary Entomology. CAB International, Wallingford

Culicoides subimmaculata



Sand Fly  
Photo: Andrew Donnelly

# Sand flies Around South Gippsland

## The Hidden Pest

Residents and visitors to South Gippsland occasionally develop itchy red spots, usually on their legs, after they have been out of doors during the summer months. They may have noticed tiny insects or felt stings, but usually they are unaware of being attacked until they develop the rash. These sores are caused by a tiny sandfly or biting midge (*Culicoides subimmaculata*) which is about 2 mm long and difficult to see.

## I Want to Suck Your Blood

The sandflies are present from October until March. They are common near native forest, coastal scrub and estuaries, probably because part of their life cycle is associated with native animals. They are most active around dawn and dusk and attack with piercing and sucking mouthparts. They look like small flies and rest with the wings folded over the abdomen.

## Itchy and Scratchy

When people are bitten by sandflies itching can commence immediately but more often not until hours later. Some people have severe reactions while others never notice anything. Visitors who have had no previous contact are more likely to develop the severe reactions. Some people develop large, weeping blisters. Sandflies are not known to transmit any disease-causing organisms to humans.

## Don't Just Scratch It

## It's a Cover Up

The best way to deal with sandflies is to avoid them. Wear protective clothes if you are out of doors in the early morning or evening or apply repellents to exposed skin. The insect repellents available at pharmacies are effective. Homemade repellents containing citronella, methylated spirits or eucalyptus have also been reported as being effective.



Figure 1. Sand fly (*Culicoides*). Credits: J. F. Butler, University of Florida

Many people find that nothing relieves the itch of sandflies, hence the importance of avoiding their bites. Commercial anti-itch creams such as Calamine and Eurax can be helpful. Some people report relief from applying methylated spirits, brown vinegar, tea tree oil or toothpaste. Severe reactions are treated with antihistamine tablets or steroid creams. The sores sometimes become infected and require treatment with antibiotics.