(revision date:8/15/2016)

Fruit flies

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful pest management.

Biology

Fruit flies are a common and annoying problem in homes, restaurants, supermarkets, and any other place where there is rotting and fermenting food. Fruit flies can be a problem any time of the year. Adult fruit flies are 1/8 inch long, usually have red eyes, and a tan and gray body. Fruit flies lay their eggs near the surface of fermenting food and moist organic material. The maggots (larvae) feed on the surface of the rotting fruit. Fruit fly larvae only need a moist bit of fermenting material to develop. Although they are especially attracted to ripened fruits and vegetables, they can also breed in drains, garbage disposals, empty bottles and cans, trash containers, mops and cleaning rags. Fruit flies take only a week to develop from egg to adult and an adult female fruit fly can lay up to 500 eggs. For information on spotted wing Drosophila or SWD (D. suzukii), visit the Spotted wing Drosophila page in the Common Insects and Mites section of the WSU Hortsense website.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

~ Eliminate food sources. Consume, discard or refrigerate ripe or over-ripe produce. Look around for the forgotten potato or spilled juice and clean and remove the food source and breeding site.
~ Breeding sites which are inaccessible (for example, garbage disposals and drains) can be inspected by taping a clear plastic food storage bag over the opening overnight. If flies are using the area to breed, the adults will emerge in the night and be caught in the bag.
~ Maintain tight-fitting screens on windows, as fruit flies can enter from the outside.

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides

None recommended.

Fruit flies

Images

~ Caption: fruit or vinegar fly adult
~ Photo by: M. El Damir, Bugwood.org