

## Fruit fly and the home gardener

### Bernie Dominiak

Project Coordinator Special Surveillance Projects,  
Surveillance & Biosecurity Operations, Orange

### What to look for

The Queensland fruit fly is wasp-like in appearance and about 7 mm long; reddish brown with distinct yellow oval markings.

Female flies lay eggs in maturing and ripe fruit with the larvae burrowing inside the fruit and destroying it. Fallen fruit generally contains fruit fly larvae which burrow into the ground and emerge as adult fruit flies. It is important that fallen fruit should be collected and destroyed.

There can be five or more generations of fruit fly in a single growing season.

### Your responsibilities

Fruit tree owners are responsible for ensuring that fruit fly is controlled on their properties. If you are unwilling or unable to control this pest, consider having your fruit trees removed and replaced with non-fruiting ornamentals.

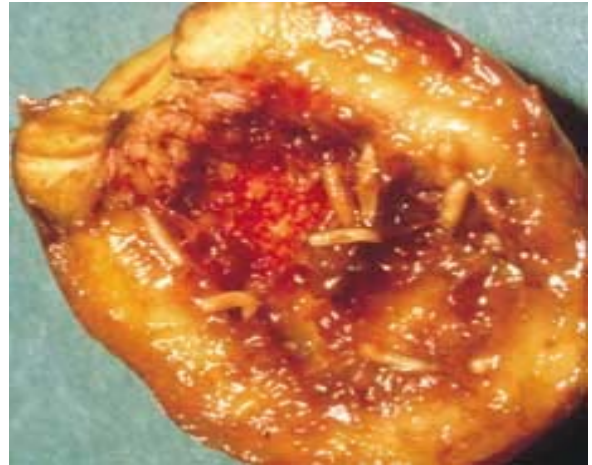
Remember: In some parts of NSW, failure to control Queensland fruit fly can lead to prosecution under the *Plant Diseases Act 1924* with fines of up to \$11,000.

### Control measures

Control of fruit fly can include collection of ripe and fallen fruit, disposal of infested fruit, and use of bait traps and cover sprays.

A simple, non-chemical method of reducing fruit fly is to remove all overripe and fallen fruit from around trees. Place infested fruit inside strong plastic bags and expose to the sun for at least three days; seven days if temperatures are below 30°C.

Products available for the control of fruit fly include splash baits and full cover sprays.



*Infested fruit showing fruit fly larvae.*

- Splash bait is applied to the foliage and trunks of trees, and controls fruit fly numbers by attracting and killing adult flies. Baiting should start five weeks before fruit ripens and continue at weekly intervals until all fruit is harvested.
- Full cover sprays should be used on maturing fruit in accordance with product label directions. Good coverage on maturing fruit is important if these chemicals are to be effective, but do not apply to hard green fruit as the fruit flies only infest maturing and ripe fruit.
- Male lure traps attract male fruit fly and are an indicator of fruit fly activity. When used alone however, they will not give adequate control.

The recommended control measures contain the active ingredients fenthion or dimethoate. These two chemicals, under several registered trade names, are available from local nurseries, farm chemical suppliers and the garden section of selected retail outlets.

### Report problems

Neglected and abandoned trees, as are found on vacant blocks, in laneways, and behind commercial premises, are an ideal breeding area for Queensland fruit fly. Report any instances of



neglected fruit trees to your nearest NSW Department of Primary Industries office.

### **Australia's problem is your problem**

The Queensland fruit fly is Australia's worst fruit pest, costing fruit growers \$100 million a year in lost income and eradication.

Poorly maintained backyard fruit trees, with overripe and fallen fruit around their base, are one of the main sources of outbreaks in Australia's major fruit-growing areas.

A Queensland fruit fly outbreak means that fresh produce cannot be sent to some interstate and overseas markets, leading to fewer jobs and less income for the region.

So, if you grow fruit trees in your backyard, our problem is also your problem.



*Fruit flies are only slightly larger than a match head.*

### **For more information**

For more information, contact your nearest NSW DPI office.

Remember: Failure to control fruit fly can lead to prosecution under the *Plant Diseases Act* with fines of up to \$11,000.



---

© State of New South Wales  
through NSW Department of Primary Industries 2007

ISSN 1832-6668

Check for updates of this Primefact at:  
[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/primefacts](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/primefacts)

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (February 2007). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of New South Wales Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

#### **Always read the label**

Users of agricultural chemical products must always read the label and any Permit before using the product, and strictly comply with the directions on the label and the conditions of any Permit. Users are not absolved from compliance with the directions on the label or the conditions of the permit by reason of any statement made or not made in this publication.

Job number 7435