

Clean orchards to reduce Asian fruit fly

Recognize the problem

The Asian fruit fly is a small fly, about 8 mm in length, with yellow and small dark brown to black markings on its wings. Larvae, also called maggots, feed inside the fruits. Damage symptoms are dark spots on the fruits, rotting of fruits, or falling of fruits. Fruit flies cause devastating damage to fruits such as mangoes, apples, guavas and many others.

Background

Female flies deposit eggs into the flesh of fruit during the rainy season from November to January. Larvae hatch in a few days and tunnel inside fruit to feed on the juice for 4-12 days. Then, the larvae exit the fruit and drop from the fruit to pupate in the soil. The adults emerge 7-10 days later and fly around to find new fruits. If you keep your plantation ground clean, you remove many larvae and prevent the emergence of new adult flies.

Management

To prevent an increase in fruit fly numbers, implement orchard hygiene and cleanliness twice a week during the fruiting season:

- Collect all infected fruits including those still on the tree as well as fallen fruits because they may contain fruit fly maggots
- Destroy each infected fruit by dipping it in water for several days, or placing it in a sealed, black plastic bag in the sun. Then feed the fruit to pigs and poultry, such as free range chicken.
- Alternatively, bury the fruit at least 50 cm deep to prevent the emerging adult flies from reaching the soil surface
- Collect the fruit tree leaves that have fallen to the ground to avoid maggots hiding and developing on the underside of the leaves
- Tie the leaves in black plastic bags and expose them to the heat of the sun for few days until all maggots are dead
- Early harvesting may help to avoid fruit fly infestation

Adult fruit fly, 0.5 to 1 cm. (Photo by Viwat Wornoyporn / IAEA, CC BY-SA)



4 adults on damaged fruit. (Photo by IITA, CC BY-NC)



Scientific name(s) > *Bactrocera dorsalis* (previously *B. invadens*)

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe



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