

Pests in Our Garden!

Bugs, creepy crawleys, birds – many other animals love fruit and veges too. When they attack and damage our plants they become garden pests.

This summer season our Cudgee kitchen garden has been attacked by fruit fly! We need to understand how fruit fly grow so we can work out how to manage them to prevent fruit fly damaging our yummy fruit and veges!

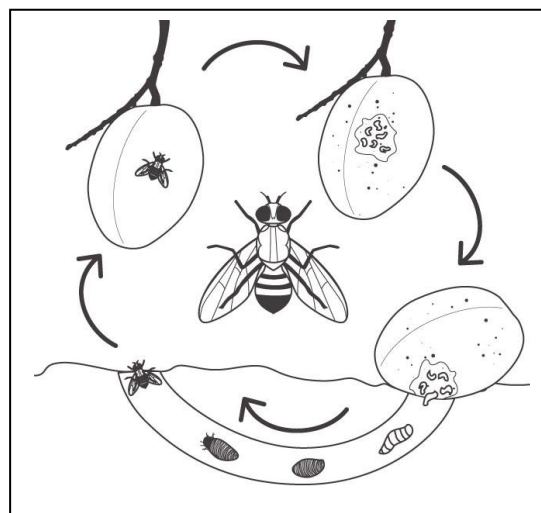
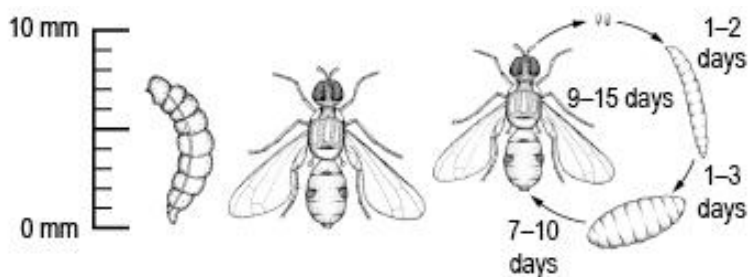
Fruit Fly

Fruit fly are a common pest in Australian gardens and food crops such as stone fruit (i.e. peaches, apricots), citrus (i.e. lemons), pome fruit (apples, pears), tomatoes, eggplant and capsicum.

Life Cycle

- Adult female fruit flies lay their eggs in unripe, green fruit and veges called 'stinging' (these eggs are too tiny to see just by looking!). These tiny flies are about 7mm long and reddish brown with yellow patches on them.
- When the eggs hatch, little larvae (often called 'grubs' or 'maggots') feed on flesh of the fruit or veges causing damage and rot which spoils it for eating. These are little white wriggling grubs that can grow up to 5-10mm long.
- The damaged fruit or veges fall to the ground and when the larvae are fully grown from feeding inside the fruit or veges, they burrow into the soil and make themselves a cocoon, which are called pupae.
- Inside the cocoon they turn into adult fruit flies and crawl out of their cocoon and out of the soil. Pupae can grow into adults within 7 days during warm months, or can lay in the soil in winter until the weather warms up again. They are cunning little critters!
- These new adult fruit flies then start eating, and the females get ready to lay their eggs.

This is called their *life cycle*. Fruit fly can develop from eggs to adults in 4 to 5 weeks in the summer growing season.



How can we stop fruit fly damaging our fruit and veges?

The key to managing fruit fly in a kitchen garden is prevention. We do not want to use pesticide (chemical) sprays on our food so we must try to prevent the fruit fly laying eggs in our fruit and veges.

1. Garden hygiene is really important. This means keeping your garden clean. It is really important to also use good garden hygiene to reduce the number of fruit flies in the garden.
 - Collect all fallen and unwanted fruit from the garden.
 - Destroy infested fruit and veges. This can be done by placing the rotten fruit and veges in black plastic bags in the sun for a week (solarisation) then dispose of in the rubbish bin. For smaller quantities, put in plastic bags in the freezer for 2 days or bake in the oven or microwave to kill fruit fly grubs.
 - Do not put rotten fruit in a compost bin as the pupae can survive and be spread with composting.
2. Removal of host plants. It may also be useful to reduce hosts for fruit fly grubs by removing plants that fruit fly have infested or are likely to infest.
3. Exclusion. Excluding the females from your fruit and veges so they cannot lay eggs on your crop is called exclusion. Exclusion can be done by using nets over the crop or bags over individual fruit or bunches of fruit. These also help stop other pests from damaging your crop such as moths and birds!
4. Trapping. Fruit fly traps are helpful for finding out if there are fruit fly in your garden. Trapping can also be used to reduce the number of fruit fly in the garden by trapping them using the following bait recipe and trapping method.

Fruit Fly Bait

2 ltrs water

1 tsp vanilla essence

½ cup sugar

2Tbs cloudy ammonia

Mix thoroughly.

Put 2 cups of mixture in a 2ltr milk bottle, put 2 holes in the bottle halfway between the mixture and lid. Place the lid on the bottle. The fumes of the cloudy ammonia will be trapped in the top third of the bottle. Hang two bottles in each tree when fruits form or in and around tomato plants. Place so sun on the bottle for most of the day. Replace every two weeks or when it looks full of fly. This mix also captures mozzies, codling moth, blow flies, house flies and cockroaches. Share the recipe with your neighbours, if you attack fruit fly as a group effort, it is possible to keep well under control.

Source: Living Earth Supplies, Mudgee. www.livingearthsupplies.com.au

...For more information go online to www.preventfruitfly.com.au