



Fruit Fly



Fruit Fly laying an egg



Fruit Flies - Male & Female



Fruit Fly Larvae



Fruit Fly Pupa

A Fruit Fly is about one third the size of the housefly. Adults have red eyes and yellow-brown bodies. Life cycle from egg to adult is approximately 10 days. Eggs are laid near or on top of fermenting materials, such as decaying fruit and vegetable matter. They are attracted to any area where moisture has accumulated. Flies are natural organisms in any decomposition system.

Always keep 3 to 4 inches of shredded moist newspaper on top of your worm bin to make it difficult for the female flies to lay eggs in the food waste.

To prevent fruit fly infestations you can freeze or microwave your food waste prior to placing in your bin. This destroys eggs and larvae that live on the peels. Allow the material to reach room temperature prior to feeding to worms.

To reduce existing fruit fly populations you can use a trap or find some beneficial nematodes from your local garden center and add them to the bin.

Fruit Fly Traps

Simple bait traps made using a small pop bottle or fruit juice bottle can be effective against the adults. Two drops of soap to break surface tension is mixed with fruit juice, beer, or apple cider as an attractant. Fruit flies are attracted to the fruit juice and become trapped when they land to lay eggs. The trap can be even more effective by placing saran wrap over the mouth of the bottle and punching holes in the center

of the saran wrap with a needle. The holes are made just big enough for the fruit fly to enter. The flies will be attracted by the juice, enter through the holes but cannot find their way out.

Beneficial Nematodes

Beneficial Nematodes are parasitic on fruit fly and fungus gnat larvae. Beneficial nematodes do not harm worms, birds, plants or the environment. They can be bought at most garden centers or on the web. Beneficial nematodes are microscopic and live below the soil surface. When they come in contact with a pest they attack and release a bacteria that kills the host within 48 hours.

Beneficial Nematodes are some of the most useful pest controls to come along in years, because if an insect spends part of its life cycle in the soil (lots of them do), predator nematodes want to kill them - it's as simple as that. Looking like microscopic "worms", predator nematodes attack and kill more than 250 different insects, including fleas, thrips, fungus gnats, even ones as large as cutworms. After invading the insect body (through mouth or anal openings), they go on to reproduce on the remains, migrating back to the soil when nothing but a shell is left. Predator nematodes attack only insects, too - never plants, earthworms, or other soil creatures, and they're unrelated to pest nematodes. But if it's an insect spending time in the soil, they zoom in for the kill.

Beneficial nematodes are so small and economical that they're sold by the package of one million, which treats up to 3000 square feet of growing area (24 million per acre). Nematodes come packaged on a small piece of "sponge" that's rinsed out in water, then watered into the soil using a watering can, sprayed on with a garden sprayer (no, the pressure doesn't hurt them - they go through the nozzles fine), fertilizer-injector or siphon feeder - it doesn't matter. Nematodes live and reproduce in any moist soil media, including rockwool, as long as they find insects to feed on. Although predator nematodes live for a few months, for best results make repeat applications every 4-6 weeks throughout the period when your target pest(s) are present to keep a high concentration in the soil. (Every 2 weeks for rockwool and other artificial soil media.) Nematodes will store dormant in the refrigerator 2-3 months before use, so it's easy to keep some on hand. Soil temperatures below the low 50's bring on dormancy, too, so a soil thermometer is useful for timing applications.

Find them at:

<http://www.biconet.com/flies/nematodes.html>

<http://www.buglogical.com/nematodes.shtml>

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