

Fruit Fly in Cucurbits

Recognize the problem

Fruit flies can damage cucurbits like watermelon, muskmelon, bitter gourd, cucumber. Attacked fruits become badly shaped, softer and smell bad. If the fruit is cut open, small worm-like maggots can be seen.

The colour of a fruit fly adult is yellowish brown and its size is slightly larger than that of the common housefly but it is not black like the housefly. The young fruit flies are creamy white and a little bit larger than rice grains.

Background

Maggots develop from the flies' eggs and feed on the pulp of the fruit. The maggot leaves the fruit and goes into the soil to overwinter where it goes through a sleeping stage and then becomes an adult. The adults attack fruit in February and March when the fruit is growing on the plants. Attacks are worse in the rainy season.

Management

Fruit flies can be controlled in different ways, before and after they attack fruit:

- Hoe around the plants during January and February, while the pests are at their sleeping stage, to expose them to the sun and to birds that will kill them
- Install 3-4 pheromone traps (available from local agrochemical dealers) per acre in the field in the 1st week of March to trap adult flies
- Collect and bury the attacked fruit at the depth of more than one foot to avoid spreading the fruit flies
- Use GF-120 (Active Ingredient: Spinosad). Add 0.5 L of GF-120 to 3.5-4.5 L water to make 4-5 L of solution. This is enough to spray 1 acre.

Adult fruit fly.



Pheromone (attractant) trap.
(Photo by Department of
Agricultural Extension, Thailand)



When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > **Drosophila**

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Pakistan



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