

Farmer Fact Sheet 21: Fruit Flies



What are they?

They are, from left to right, Mango fly, Melon fly, Solomon fly and Breadfruit fly. Each attacks several plants. Melon fly is newly introduced; it is not yet in Makira, Rennell/Bellona and Temotu Provinces.

What damage do they do?

Eggs are laid in the fruit, and maggots do the damage causing the fruit to rot.

How do I identify them?

Look for rotten fruit, and small holes in the skin. Open up fruits and look for maggots. Maggots have to be reared to identify the species. To catch the flies, MAL uses commercial fruit fly traps containing bait and an insecticide.

How do I manage fruit flies?

Fruit fly maggots are parasitised by tiny wasps, and eaten by spiders and other insects, such as ants, assassin bugs and beetles. Weaver ants stop fruit flies from laying eggs. Chickens, pigs and flying foxes, reduce fruit fly populations by eating the fruit.

Cultural control:

- Collect and destroy fallen, damaged and overripe fruits; harvest crops early to avoid attack; encourage weaver ants by planting soursops;
- Sew or staple double layers of newspaper around guava, mango and carambola. In Papua New Guinea, whole banana bunches are 'bagged' with banana leaves;

Chemical control:

- Spray with insecticides, for example, fenthion or dimethoate;
- Protein-bait technique: Protein from yeast and an insecticide are spot-sprayed around crops. Young female fruit flies are attracted to feed on the mixture and die.
- Male-annihilation-technique: High-density of baits (special chemical plus insecticide) used to attract and kill males. NOT A METHOD FOR FARMERS.