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## **Fruit Flies**

With the cooler, wet weather there has been a significant increase in the number of tiny flies in the house. What can be done? Is there a magic solution?

The lifecycle of the fruit fly usually occurs in 12 to 14 days, going from egg to adult. As an adult they are attracted to fruit but if there is none available they will live inside drains or in damp towels, mops dishtowels or mops.

There are several management strategies that will help to minimize the population; however there is no magic bullet that will eliminate the pest from the home. Use more than one method and look forward to the frost.

Keep food enclosed and out of the open, especially fruit. Although we like to keep fruit in a bowl where it is easily reached when snacks are necessary, it is better to keep food covered or in the refrigerator until the house is pest free. If you have a potato bin, find a new place to keep the potatoes where flies can't reach.

Don't forget the garbage and recycling bins. Pests can live just as easily in the liquid found inside our garbage as the kitchen drain. Make sure your recycling is kept far from the house as it will attract flies that could then easily enter the house. Take compost outside to the composter instead of leaving it indoors overnight.

Drains become secondary homes to these insects. Add bleach to drain holes at night and flush clean in the morning. This will help to eliminate populations from staying alive out of sight.

Clean dishes, replace old sponges or dish towels and wash damp towels instead of leaving them hang overnight.

Plug holes in screens and minimize the opening of outside entries. This is likely where the majority of pests enter the house. Each time the door is opened, more sneak in. You may also place fly traps just inside the door which may catch some as they enter.

Use the fly swatter. It is still a truly effective method for killing flying pests.

Traps can help reduce pest numbers in the home. There are variations on the standard trap but they all involve a jar, bowl or glass, an attractant (fruit, balsamic vinegar, wine or apple cider) and a few drops of dish soap. Some choose to leave the top open and some use a funnel on the jar. Either way, the potion inside the jar will attract the flies but it is important to make sure they can't get away.

Place warm apple cider inside a jar, add a couple drops of dish soap and cover with a funnel, placing the small opening inside the jar or facing down. This is the basic trap; flies go in but don't get out. If you use fruit inside the container make sure to add a sweet liquid with a few drops of dish soap to help capture the pests. Rinse and replace the liquid weekly.

**The Extension office is open Monday - Friday, located in Kennett, Missouri at 101 South Main Street (the old bank) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. For horticulture questions contact the horticulture specialist at 573-686-8064. MU is an equal opportunity/ADA institution.**