



## URBAN ENTOMOLOGY FACT SHEET

### Fruit Flies

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**Identification:** These flies belong to the genus *Drosophila*. Fruit flies are very small 1.5-2.5mm, stout-bodied, and often have red eyes. Most are tan or light brown, with darker lines on the abdomen.

**Life Cycle and Habits:** The reproductive potential of fruit flies is enormous. The entire life cycle can be completed in 10 days, depending on environmental conditions. Adult females can produce approximately 500 eggs. These eggs are laid near the surface of fermenting fruits or vegetables. The larvae develop in the juices—feeding primarily on yeast. The larvae pupate and the adults emerge to mate in approximately 2 days. Adults are seen hovering in small circles above fruits and vegetables. Because of their small size they are often able to penetrate window screening to enter homes. They are attracted to light.

**Damage:** Fruit flies are mainly nuisance pests. However, when the larvae infest food preparation areas, they can be a health threat due to contamination. Fruit flies will commonly infest bananas, grapes, peaches, pineapples, tomatoes, potatoes, etc. Fermenting liquids such as beer, cider, vinegar, and wine are also susceptible. They will also exploit sour mop heads, dishwater with food particles, fruit in a bowl, or liquid in the bottom of trash cans.

**Control Measures:** The keys to controlling fruit flies are inspection and sanitation. The presence of adult flies indicates that larvae are developing somewhere nearby. Eliminate larval food and development sites (see above) by discarding susceptible items and cleaning infested areas. Aerosol insecticides can be used to kill adults, but are only temporary if proper sanitation isn't implemented prior to their use. If insecticides are used, only apply them after sanitation and only to areas where adult flies are present. If you suspect that flies are entering from outside through window/door screening, use blinds or other window coverings to minimize the light visible from outside.