

Fruit flies in the home

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What people commonly call fruit flies are flies from the genus **Drosophila**. Also known as pumice or vinegar flies, they range from 1/16 to 1/8 inch long and are light to dark brown in color. Some of the common species have bright red eyes. These insects will be found hovering around overly ripe fruit, open beer or soft drink containers, around bread, and near garbage disposals or waste cans.



Fruit flies can breed very quickly. Eggs are laid near the surface of fermenting and rotting material. The larvae feed on the yeast associated with the decaying or fermenting material. The complete life cycle can be completed in 8- 10 days. **The only way to control fruit flies is to find and eliminate the breeding site.** Indoor flying insect sprays containing pyrethrins will control adults that are present at the time of spraying, but offer no residual control. Without cleaning up the source you will not stop the problem.

The most common source of fruit fly breeding is overly ripe, fermenting fruit or vegetables. Check onion, potatoes, squash or other produce that may be stored out of sight. Apples, bananas and other fruit that is in the kitchen may attract adults that are present, but are not decayed enough to support maggots. Banana peels or apple cores that are accidentally swept under furniture or appliances can support significant number of flies. You often need to be a good detective to find the breeding source. In commercial restaurants look for leaking pies, drains or tubes around soft drink, beer, and milk dispensers. Improperly grouted floor or wall tiles that allow food contaminated water to seep and collect can also allow breeding.

Other places to look include-

- * Bottom of trash and garbage cans. Caked vegetable matter
- * Drain pans from refrigerators or iceboxes
- * Bottles and cans that are to be recycled. Old catsup bottles are a favorite source.
- * Mops, rags brooms or buckets that are soiled with garbage -laden water or are sour smelling
- * Broken drain traps or floor drains that contain fermenting organic matter
- * Rotting bulb, or wet decaying plant material

A simple adult trap is a jar baited with ripe bananas, pears or wine with a top funnel to keep adults trapped in the jar. Old wine bottles that have residue inside will also capture adults.

For more information on: contact your County Extension Agent: