

Fact Sheet:

Mediterranean Fruit Fly

Ceratitis capitata

The Mediterranean Fruit Fly, or Medfly, is one of the world's most destructive fruit pests. Because of its wide distribution over the world, its ability to tolerate cooler climates, and its wide range of hosts, it is ranked first among economically important fruit fly species. In addition to physical damage Medfly inflicts economic damage through loss of market access, and costs associated with quarantine and monitoring.

Identification

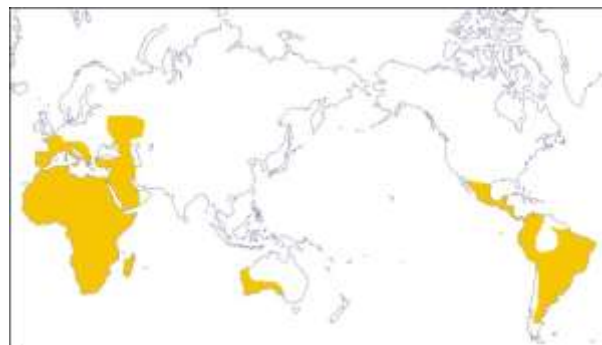


Adult medfly (image above) are slightly smaller than a common housefly (6 mm) and very colourful with red and blue eyes, a brown head, and a yellowish abdomen with silver bands. Wings are normally drooping, have a blotchy yellow and brown pattern and black spots and bands.



Eggs are 1mm, white and laid beneath the skin of host fruit. Larvae (image above) are creamy white, with a blunt rear tapering towards the front.

Distribution and Climate Range



Medfly distribution shown in yellow

Medfly originated in tropical Africa and has since spread to the Mediterranean, parts of Central and South America and South West Australia. This fruit fly can attack a huge range of over 250 hosts including tree crops; avocados, apples, citrus, summerfruit and kiwifruit. Adult medfly will not survive sub-zero winter temperatures and will not lay eggs below 15 °C.

Signs and Symptoms

The most significant damage is inflicted on fruit by larval feeding and decomposition by invading secondary pathogens. Mature attacked fruits may develop a water soaked appearance; young fruits become distorted and usually drop. Infested fruits may show "sting" marks on the skin.

Control

New Zealand has a fruit fly surveillance program that has been operating for almost 20 years and involves over 7500 traps nationwide. There have been 9 recorded fruit fly interceptions since 1989, one of which was for Medfly and resulted in an eradication program being initiated and successfully prevented a population establishing.

What should you do if you think you have seen this pest?

Phone:

MPI - 0800 80 99 66 or KVH - 0800 665 825