



The *Bactrocera occipitalis* fruit fly.  
Image Ken Walker, Museum Victoria,  
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The *Bactrocera occipitalis* fruit fly.  
Image Anthony O'Toole, Pest &  
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## Exotic threats of tropical fruit: *Bactrocera occipitalis* fruit fly

### What is it?

The fruit fly *Bactrocera occipitalis* is a serious pest on many fruit crop species, including banana, carambola, citrus, guava, mango, papaya, santol and sapodilla. It is likely that its true host range is much wider than is currently understood. *Bactrocera occipitalis* is a serious threat to fruit production in the tropical and subtropical regions where it occurs.

### What do I look for?

Fruit flies are pest insects whose larvae (maggots) live in and feed off the flesh of fruit and vegetables. Fruit should be inspected for any symptoms of infestation, such as puncture marks and any associated necrosis and decomposition of the fruit that appears as black or brown lesions. Suspect fruits should be cut open and checked for larvae.

The species *Bactrocera occipitalis* was described only recently, hence little is specifically known about its biology. However, it is assumed to be no different to other very closely related species. These species have four life stages: eggs, larvae (maggots), pupae, and the adult flies. The eggs are about 0.8 mm long and 0.2 mm wide, white to yellow-white in colour, and are laid under the skin of the fruit. The mature larvae are about 7.5 – 9.5 mm long and 1.5 – 2 mm wide. Pupae are barrel-shaped and are white to yellow-brown in colour. The adult flies are mostly black or dark brownish-grey in colour, or a mixture of black and yellow (see pictures).

*Bactrocera occipitalis* is one of several species of tropical fruit flies which are difficult or impossible to differentiate based on morphological characteristics. Suspect samples of the pest must be sent to a laboratory for accurate identification. If you see any of these life stages of *Bactrocera occipitalis*, you should keep samples for identification and report your findings immediately.

### Where is it found?

The *Bactrocera occipitalis* fruit fly is native to Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines. It was introduced into Palau in the late 1990s.

## Reporting

Growers may report suspected exotic pests to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 881) or can directly contact their relevant state agriculture or primary industries department.

To minimise the risk of disease spread, samples should not be moved until they have been checked by an expert.

This fact sheet is part of the National Tropical Fruit Industry Biosecurity Plan. For more information about the Biosecurity Plan, please contact Plant Health Australia.



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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