

Melon fruit fly

What is the Melon fruit fly?

Melon fruit fly (*Bactrocera cucurbitae*) is a small fruit fly that attacks a range of fruit including melon, citrus and papaya. Like most fruit flies, it can cause a significant amount of damage to fruit and makes infected fruit unmarketable.

What does it look like?

The Melon fruit fly has a predominantly orange-brown coloured body and abdomen. It is approximately 6-8 mm long. The wings have two distinctive smoky-brown coloured spots (one on the tip and one on the rear of the wing).

What can it be confused with?

At first glance most fruit flies are very similar. The Melon fruit fly can be differentiated from other fruit flies by its overall orange-brown colour together with the brown coloured spots on the wings. However expert diagnosis is required for correct identification. If you see any unusual fruit flies consult an agronomist or contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881 as soon as possible.

What should I look for?

The Melon fruit fly is visible to the naked eye so you should keep a look out for small orange-brown coloured fruit flies, especially around fallen or damaged fruit. Traps may also help you look for fruit flies in your orchard. If you see any unusual fruit flies in your orchard contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881 as soon as possible.



Live adult

Scott Bauer, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org



Adults laying eggs (ovipositing) on a citrus fruit

Florida Division of Plant Industry Archive, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Bugwood.org



Adult Melon fruit fly

Merle Shepard, Gerald R. Carner, and P.A.C. Ooi, Insects and their Natural Enemies Associated with Vegetables and Soybean in Southeast Asia, Bugwood.org



How does it spread?

Adult Melon fruit fly can disperse over long distances through flight, while the transport of larvae in infested fruit can result in the global movement of the pest.

Where is it now?

The Melon fruit fly has a wide distribution and is found in parts of north Africa, southern Asia, China and south eastern Asia and Hawaii. The fruit fly is not known to occur in Australia. If it enters Australia many tropical and subtropical fruit producing areas could be put at risk.

How can I protect my orchard from Melon fruit flies?

Check your orchard frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common papaya insect pests so you can tell if you see something different.

Maintain good hygiene and ensure that fallen fruit is collected and disposed of so that it cannot harbour fruit flies.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline

**EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**



Adult Melon fruit fly. Note smoky-brown wing markings

Florida Division of Plant Industry Archive, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Bugwood.org



Dorsal view of adult Melon fruit fly

Ken Walker Museum Victoria, PaDIL



Lateral view of adult Melon fruit fly

Ken Walker Museum Victoria, PaDIL

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