

Fact sheet: Mediterranean Fruit Fly



The Mediterranean Fruit Fly (Medfly), or *Ceratitis capitata*, is one of the world's most destructive fruit pests. Because of its wide distribution all 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 (see image top right) are slightly smaller than a common housefly (6mm) 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 (see image below right) are creamy white, with a blunt rear tapering towards the front.



Signs and symptoms

The most significant damage is inflicted on fruit by larval feeding and decomposition by invading secondary pathogens.

Mature attacked fruit may develop a water-soaked appearance; young fruit can become distorted and usually drop. Infested fruit may show "sting" marks on the skin.



Distribution and climate range

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.



Surveillance

New Zealand has a fruit fly surveillance programme that has been operating for almost 20 years and involves over 7500 traps nationwide.

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

Phone MPI on 0800 80 99 66 or KVH on 0800 665 825