

PEST ALERT



Mediterranean Fruit Fly (*Ceratitis capitata*): A Threat to Bahamian Agriculture

The Mediterranean fruit fly, also known as medfly, is described as one of the world's most destructive agricultural pests, threatening more than 300 kinds of fruits, nuts, and vegetables. The female medfly attacks ripening fruit, piercing the soft skin and laying eggs in the pulp. The eggs hatch into larvae that feed inside the fruit pulp, causing the fruit to rot.

Distribution

The medfly which originated in Africa, is found in most tropical and subtropical areas of the world. This pest has spread throughout the Mediterranean region, southern Europe, the Middle East, Western Australia, South and Central America, and Hawaii. It was also recently detected in the Caribbean.

The medfly could attack mangoes, papayas, avocados, citrus, guavas, cherries, peppers, tomatoes, and several types of nuts, among many other crops. The damage caused by medflies makes the product unfit for sale to consumers.

If the medfly were to become established in our country, this could result in significant economic impacts including increased treatment costs, lost markets, reduced crop yields and premature fruit drop.

Appearance and Life Cycle

The adult medfly is slightly smaller than a common housefly and is very colorful. It has dark blue eyes; a shiny, black thorax (back); and a yellowish abdomen with silvery crossbands. Its wings, normally drooping, display a blotchy pattern with yellow, brown, and black spots and bands. The medfly's life cycle has five phases: 1) The adult female deposits eggs under the fruit's skin. 2) The eggs hatch and produce wormlike larvae. (maggots). 3) The larvae feed on the fruit's pulp before dropping to the ground, where they burrow into the soil. 4) The larvae transform into pupae in the soil. 5) The pupae mature into adults (flies) and emerge from the soil. The medfly completes its life cycle in 21 to 30 days.

Medfly has not been detected in the Bahamas. BAHFSA is preparing to re-launch a MedFly Surveillance Program.

What You Can Do

We need your help to keep the medfly from spreading.

Open-air fruit and vegetable stand and farmers' market vendors, mobile vendors, and farmers are asked to take basic steps to protect host material from pest infestation and sell only approved fruits and vegetables.

Please cooperate with agricultural workers who may be in your area surveying for the pest.

Know and follow any quarantine restrictions in medfly-infested areas. Also, when traveling, declare all food, live animals, and plant or animal products to a Customs officer or agricultural inspector at the port of entry.

Be on the lookout for the medfly, and support control and eradication efforts in your area.

Additional Information

For more information on Medfly, contact the Plant Protection Division of BAHFSA at (242) 604-7004; email:bahfsa@bahamas.gov.bs; yasminjohnson@bahamas.gov.bs



fly on a mango/fruit; lar-quality



vae; a Medfly trap; how Medfly affects fruit

*Please include images of the following: a mature Med-

*Include BAHFSA, MAMR, International Year of Plant Health Logos please