

VECTOR CONTROL BRANCH
Hawaii Department of Health

VINEGAR FLIES

Vinegar flies are small flies that occasionally become pests in homes, restaurants, markets, bars, and other establishments where fresh food is prepared or stored. The most common pest species of vinegar flies is 1/8 inch, and has bright red eyes, a yellow body, and a blackish abdomen. Other less common vinegar flies that cause nuisance are similar in appearance but have brown eyes and bodies.



CAUSES OF VINEGAR FLY PROBLEMS

The major causes of vinegar flies in homes and food establishments are rotting fruits, vegetables, sugared products, and other fermenting foods that attracts them as a source of food and breeding material.

Common sources of vinegar fly attraction are:

OUTDOORS: rotting fruit under trees; unharvested pineapples in fields, fermenting food material adhering to bottoms of trash containers.

INDOORS: Rotting fruits and vegetables carelessly swept under counters or other hidden places; floor drains containing spilled syrup, fruit juices, or food scraps; water in refrigerator drain pans containing spilled milk or juice; fermenting food scraps in cracks and crevices of floor tiles or processing machinery; stale beer, soda, fruit juices left in opened containers.

LIFE CYCLE

Maggots that hatch two days after being laid, feed and grow for 5-6 days before forming pupae, or cocoons, to transform into adult flies. Each female is capable of laying 500 eggs. Development from egg to adult takes 8-10 days.

CONTROL METHODS

Locate and eliminate all fermenting material in and around premises that could attract vinegar flies. Apply aerosol sprays for temporary control of adult flies until the source of the problem is found and eliminated. Use only aerosol sprays specifically approved for use in food preparation areas. Follow label directions exactly.

CAUTION: *Certain pesticides and their solvents may cause respiratory irritation. Persons with respiratory diseases should consult their physicians before using any pesticide. IT IS A VIOLATION OF FEDERAL LAW IF PESTICIDES ARE NOT APPLIED EXACTLY AS THE LABEL DIRECTS.*

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