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Control of the CURRANT FRUIT FLY

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CONTROL OF THE CURRANT FRUIT FLY

H.P. Richardson¹ and H. Andison²

The currant fruit fly³ is a serious pest of currants and gooseberries. In many parts of Canada it is the chief factor limiting the production of these fruits.

DESCRIPTION AND LIFE HISTORY

The insect passes the winter as a pupa in a puparium, in the soil beneath the bushes. The puparium is about the size and shape of a wheat kernel. It is smooth and light to dark brown.

The flies begin to emerge when the currants are in full flower. They are yellowish, and about half as large as a house fly. They are very active and difficult to observe. The flies start laying eggs about 10 days after they emerge, when most of the blossoms have withered.

The female fly lays eggs in the young fruit (Figure 1). The eggs hatch in about a week and as the maggots develop they eat the surrounding tissue.

Infested berries become discolored around the spots where the eggs were inserted, and ripen unevenly and prematurely. Many drop from the bushes before the main crop is ripe, but others remain (Figure 2) and are picked with the normal berries.

The maggots leave the fruits soon after they fall, enter the soil to a depth of one to two inches, and form puparia in which they pupate. They remain in this stage until the next May.

CONTROL

To control the currant fruit fly, apply methoxychlor at 2 pounds of 50 percent wettable powder in 100 gallons of water, or 25 pounds of 5 percent dust per acre. Two applications are needed to kill the flies before they begin to lay eggs; the first when 80 percent of the blossoms have withered or fallen, and the second 10 days later. Spray or dust the bushes thoroughly.

Cautions: Follow closely all the cautions listed on the insecticide label. The interval required between the last application and harvest varies with the number of applications and the amount of methoxychlor applied. Keep to the interval given to avoid residues that would render the fruit unfit for sale.

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³*Epochra canadensis* (Loew)

Figure 1.—Female fly laying eggs in a young currant.

Figure 2.—Currants, at picking time, damaged by the currant fruit fly.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information consult your agricultural representative or provincial entomologist, or write to the Research Station of the Canada Department of Agriculture at Winnipeg (Box 6200, Winnipeg 1), Man., or the Research Station at Saanichton, B.C.

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