

Extension Education  
Jeff Banks News Column  
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## How to Get Rid of Fruit Flies

By Jeff Banks

Eric Ronning gives the following steps and ideas for ridding your home of that pesky fly: **Find and remove all food-based breeding grounds.** Start in the kitchen. Dispose of any overripe fruits or vegetables. Cover fruit bowls or, better yet, put them in the fridge. Do the dishes. Fruit flies will lay eggs on leftover plates and in dirty glasses. Search through every cupboard and check for wet or infested grains, crackers, potatoes, pastas, beans, etc. If it looks questionable, get rid of it. Take the garbage out immediately. Search the entire house for other food messes. Pay special attention to kids' rooms. Look under beds and in closets for dirty dishes. Wash all sponges, dish rags, and towels. Sweep and mop, dump mop water, clean bucket, and wash mop head.

**Find and remove all other breeding grounds.** Once you have disposed of all their favorites, fruit flies will be forced to find alternatives. You will need to find and take care of these as well. If you have one, start by cleaning the dishwasher. Clean inside and out and get all excess food and liquid. You will want to do dishes by hand until the fruit fly infestation is gone. Clean under the stove and under the oven. Clean the seals on the fridge and freezer doors. Because fruit flies will eat nectar and like moisture in soil, potted plants and flowers should be taken outside. Check under sinks for drips and rotten wood. Clean drains and garbage disposals. Make sure there's no wet lint around and under the washing machine.

**Proper storage measures.** Once you have done everything you can think to do to remove breeding grounds for fruit flies, the last thing you want to do is allow them to destroy even more of your good food. Do yourself a favor, and go to the store and get some good canisters, cans, or plastic storage containers with tight-fitting lids for food products like grains, pastas, cereals, beans, peas, flour, crackers, and anything else that might attract fruit flies if it gets damp. If you run across something that you're not sure about, put it in a container. Better safe than sorry. Be sure to also get a garbage can with a tight-fitting lid.

**Exclusion measures.** Once you have done everything you can think of to get rid of fruit flies in your home, it's time to do whatever you can do to keep them from getting in again. First thing's first. If you have trash cans sitting outside, start keeping them as far from the house as possible. If you have a compost pile that you throw food waste in, either stop doing it or at least make sure to immediately cover it up with yard waste. Patch any holes in window screens. Keep doors closed. Look for and fill any cracks around doors and windows.

**Alright, you've done it! Now set a timer.** Just because you're no longer seeing any evidence of fruit flies does not mean that you've won the battle. Under normal temperature conditions, it could take anywhere from 7 to 14 days for fruit flies to move from egg to adult. So don't start celebrating until at least two weeks have passed. In the meantime, keep up on sanitation.

## Homemade Fruit Fly Traps

**Soda bottle fruit fly trap.** Cut the top off a clean two liter soda bottle just above the label and put a couple inches of tasty liquid, like juice, wine, red wine vinegar, or balsamic

vinegar in the bottom. Invert the top of the bottle with the lid off and stuff it down. Seal the edge with some duck tape and let the fun begin. The fruit flies go in but are too dumb to get back out.

**Funnel fruit fly trap.** Make a cone from a sheet of construction paper and cut the top off to create a funnel. Pour a little cider vinegar in the bottom of a clean jar and, without allowing the bottom to touch the liquid, stick the funnel in the jar so that it fits tight. You may need to use a little tape. The key is to avoid any gaps. The fruit flies are attracted to the cider vinegar, fly into the cone, can't get out, and drown.

## How to Kill Fruit Flies with Commercial Goodies

Because fruit flies are so common, there are quite a few different commercial products for killing fruit flies. Probably the most common of these is fruit fly traps. Most of these are little plastic or cardboard units filled with sticky stuff and an attractant like vinegar or fruit scent. They can be placed almost anywhere. A couple good examples of these are Natural Catch Plus Fruit Fly Traps, Vector 960 Fruit Fly Trap, and Banana Scent Fruit Fly Trap. There are even some electric fruit fly traps that plug into an ordinary outlet like the FlyWeb Fly Light and the Insectalite 30 Watt Professional. These use a little lamp to lure fruit flies in where they get stuck to a glue board. And, of course, you can't forget about good, old-fashioned fly strips. If you're looking for something to hit 'em with in flight, there are also numerous pyrethrin sprays available like Clear Zone I Pyrethrin Aerosol, CB Intruder HPX, and Microcare Aerosol. If you're looking for something to dump down the drain to kill fruit flies, I would suggest InVade Bio Drain Gel or DF 5000 Drain Gel.

For more information on Fruit Flies from Eric Ronning visit <http://www.getridofthings.com/pests/flies/get-rid-of-fruit-flies/>