

HOW TO USE APPLE MAGGOT TRAPS

Detection

The most effective method of detecting apple maggot flies is with a yellow rectangular sticky trap and lure (bait). These traps are available through seed supply catalogs or other gardening supply companies. They are also available through the Skagit County Horticultural Pest Control Coordinator, 306 South First Street, Mount Vernon.

Use of traps can tell you whether or not you have apple maggots in your tree. If you catch a fly that looks like an apple maggot, remove the fly very carefully and take it to the Pest Control Coordinator for identification. Careful removal, without damaging the insect, is very important for accurate diagnosis. The snowberry maggot has a wing pattern exactly like the apple maggot; therefore, microscopic examination is necessary to distinguish between the two.

If the fly is diagnosed as an apple maggot, control measures should be started immediately (refer to Extension fact sheet: "Help Save Skagit Apples"). Insecticide sprays should be repeated at least every two weeks through September. There is no need to spray unless you have found an apple maggot.

Continue monitoring with the yellow trap throughout the summer. Yellow sticky traps and lures need to be replaced every 2 weeks.

Trap placement

Traps should be hung during the last week in June. One trap per tree should be placed in apples, crabapples, or hawthorn. Early maturing apple cultivars such as Transparent and Gravenstein are particularly attractive to flies.

Hang apple maggot traps on the south side of trees where fruit will appear. Place them about five or six feet off the ground, in the outer third of the tree canopy. Traps hung below the fruit-producing zone or hidden deep in the interior of the tree are of little value (Fig. 1). Position traps with their edges toward the trunk of the tree (Fig. 2), allowing maximum exposure of their broad surfaces within the canopy. Trim back foliage and fruit within 12 inches of the trap, but allow as much foliage and fruit as possible beyond this distance (Fig. 3). Tightly secure traps to branches so they do not swing in the wind (Fig. 4).

Control

Red sphere traps can be used to help control apple maggot. Control is only 70% to 80% as compared with 90% to 95% using insecticides. The sphere mimics the shape and color of an apple, and a lure that smells like apples is attached to attract the maggot. Special sticky material is applied to the sphere, which traps the maggot. To achieve control, the spheres should be hung 3 to 4 feet apart in the tree canopy.

The yellow card traps are best used for monitoring for apple maggot. Red sphere traps are used if you know you have apple maggot in your yard and want to control it. They are less convenient to use for monitoring, because of the handling of the stickum and also because the fly is harder to see against the red color.

For questions about apple maggot, contact the Skagit County Horticultural Pest Control Coordinator, 360/336-4270 or 360/708-2362 (cell).