



MANAGING FRUIT FLIES IN YOUR KITCHEN COMPOST BIN

Female fruit flies lay hundreds of eggs in a very short time.

Below are some tips to prevent a fruit fly infestation in your kitchen and tips on how to manage existing fruit flies.

TIPS TO HANDLE A FRUIT FLY INFESTATION

1. Make vinegar cups to trap the flies.

If you already have a fruit fly issue, this very simple method of catching them should help get rid of them in no time. The scent of the vinegar attracts the flies and the soap cuts the surface tension of the vinegar so they sink and drown.

You need:

- A small bowl or cup.
- Add equal parts water and vinegar (best is apple cider vinegar or balsamic vinegar) so the container is about 1/4 - 1/2 full.
- Add three drops of dish soap on top and gently swirl



Leave uncovered; or to catch even more flies, cover with one of the following:

- Plastic wrap, secure it with an elastic band or string, and poke a few holes in the wrap with a toothpick or fork.
- Roll a sheet of paper into a funnel shape, tape it closed and put it on top of the container so the opening is above the liquid line.

Consider making a couple and leave the cup(s) near an area with the most activity from fruit flies for a few days. Clean out and replenish cups as needed all summer.



2. Clean your garbage disposal.

Fruit flies can also inhabit and lay eggs in garbage disposals if sufficient food is present. Run your disposal often to cycle out food particles and keep your disposal clean. You can pour boiling water down the drain weekly to help keep it clear of residue and below is a recipe you could try that will kill fruit fly eggs:

- Pour a half cup of baking soda onto the bottom of the sink and into the disposal area.
- Then pour a cup of white or apple cider vinegar on top, and it should bubble up.
- Let it sit for a few minutes then run the water and turn the unit on to clear it.

TIPS TO AVOID FRUIT FLIES

1) Ensure your kitchen compost bin has a lid.

This may seem obvious but making sure your kitchen compost bin has a good and secure lid on it is the most important thing you can do to prevent a fruit fly infestation.



2) Empty your kitchen bin more often or move it outside.

Hold only one to two days' worth of food scraps in your kitchen bin. Less volume equals fewer flies. Consider storing your bin outside during summer months instead of inside your kitchen.

3) Freeze your food scraps.

Space permitting, store food scraps temporarily in the freezer in between visits to the drop sites. The cold temperature will kill any fruit fly eggs. There are also kitchen compost bins designed specifically to fit in your freezer, such as on the door, instead of being left on the kitchen counter.

4) Layer the bin with browns.

Food rots more slowly when there is no liquid. Another simple thing you can do is add browns to absorb excess liquid. Wrap your kitchen scraps in newspaper, place a used paper towel, piece of brown paper bag or a bit of diatomaceous earth over the scraps to soak up moisture and keep odor at bay. As the food starts to break down, the browns will help to contain and deter the scent that attracts fruit flies.

5) Keep your kitchen bin clean.

Use BPI certified compostable bags to help keep the bins clean and food scraps sealed. Rinse empty bins regularly with hot, soapy water between collections to get any eggs out that have been laid or try adding a small splash of biodegradable soap such as Dr. Bronners.

6) Avoid leaving dirty dishes out.

When dinner's finished, immediately toss food particles into the compost bin, clean up any spills (especially fruit juice or alcohol) and make sure to rinse those dishes. Leaving dirty dishes sitting in the kitchen sink will attract these pests providing food and a moist area for them to reproduce.

7) Store fresh fruits and veggies in the fridge.

Fruit flies are attracted to all produce, whether it is ripe, rotting or decaying. Eliminating fresh produce from your countertop or table and instead storing produce in the fridge is a best practice to prevent fruit flies.

8) Wash produce to remove eggs.

Often when you purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, fruit fly eggs travel into your home ON that produce. It is also possible for a fruit fly to travel in from the outdoors through tiny cracks in your home (like under your front door) based on scents it picks up. When you wash produce, that can remove any potential eggs or larvae from ever hatching inside your home.

9) Clean your garbage disposal regularly.

Prevent fruit flies from inhabiting your garbage disposal with frequent cleanings. Follow the recipe above.