

Not All Alien Invaders Are From Outer Space



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Mexican Fruit Fly
Anastrepha ludens (Loew)

Mediterranean Fruit Fly
Ceratitis capitata (Wiedemann)

Mexican Fruit Fly, *Anastrepha ludens* (Loew)

Mediterranean Fruit Fly, *Ceratitis capitata* (Wiedemann)

The Mediterranean fruit fly (also called Medfly) and the Mexican fruit fly are among the world's most destructive pests. The Medfly is originally from Africa and has spread throughout southern Europe, the Middle East, western Australia, South and Central America, and Hawaii. Medflies accidentally brought into Florida and California in imported fruit have almost established permanent populations on many occasions. But Government and the agricultural community have stopped this pest each time.

As its name implies, the Mexican fruit fly is from Mexico, but it does not stop at the border. Each year, populations of this pest fly into the fruit groves of the lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas. It also frequently threatens California. Government and the agricultural community also combine forces against the Mexican fruit fly.

The Medfly is slightly smaller than a common house fly and very colorful. It has

dark blue eyes, a shiny black thorax (back), and a yellowish abdomen with silvery cross bands. Its wings have yellow, brown, and black spots and bands. The Mexican fruit fly is larger than a house fly. It has green eyes, transparent wings with "V" marks, and a yellowish-brown body with black specks.



These nasty cousins destroy many types of fruit, including oranges, grapefruits, peaches, and pears. Female fruit flies lay their eggs in pieces of fruit. The eggs hatch into larvae (also called maggots). The maggots eat the flesh of the fruit, causing it to rot.

These flies could cause billions of dollars' worth of damage if they became established in the United States. The scariest thing about these fruit flies is that you often can't see their damage until you bite into a piece of fruit....

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