Common Fruit Insects

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Codling moths (1) destroy apples in individual trees or orchards that are not cared for properly. Larvae developing in fruit cause “wormy apples.” “Stings” occur when first instar larvae are prevented from entering the fruit. Young worms enter through the calyx cup at the blossom end in early June. A second generation attacks in late July or early August, entering the side of the fruit. Larvae overwinter in thick silken cocoons under loose trunk bark, in protected sites around the tree base, or in ground nearby.

Apple maggots (2) attack home orchards and threaten commercial orchards. Severe fruit injury occurs on neglected or poorly sprayed trees. Called “railroad worms,” apple maggots leave brown winding bacterial trails just under the skin of some varieties. For further details see publication A1851 –Controlling Apple Maggots in Home Gardens.

Redbanded leafrollers (3) feed primarily on foliage. However, larvae will feed on the fruit surface, producing shallow, irregular scars. The first larval generation attacks foliage and some immature fruit in June; the second feeds on mature fruit, with heaviest damage occurring in August. These insects overwinter in the pupal stage in rolled leaves on the ground.

Green fruitworms (4) feed on new foliage of backyard trees in the spring and then on developing apples for several weeks after fruit set. They eat large, irregular cavities in the sides and stem end of the fruit. Larvae rest on twigs or branches near damaged fruit.

Apple aphids (5) feed on fruiting clusters early in the season, causing stunted, misshapen, hard, knotty apples. Later feeding causes severe russetting or black markings from honeydew and sooty mold fungus. Feeding on growing terminals causes curls, stunts, and distortions. Of the numerous aphid species in Wisconsin, the green-colored apple aphid is most troublesome.

San Jose scales (6) attach to twigs, branches, trunks, leaves and fruits. They cause circular, gray or brownish-gray spots about 1/16 inch wide with a slightly raised, yellow center. Red circles surrounding individual scales on fruit are characteristic. These insects are most severe in eastern Wisconsin.

Cherry fruit flies (7) have only recently troubled Wisconsin’s sour cherry producing area. They are not a problem on individual trees in other parts of the state.

Plum curculios (8) severely affect apples, cherries, plums and other Wisconsin tree fruits. First, they feed on developing buds and petals. As fruit forms, the female cuts a half-moon shaped slit through the skin, eats a small cavity, and deposits an egg. After larvae feed for a time, the fruit usually drops to the ground. Fruit that does not drop will develop knots, depressions or fan-shaped scars.

Twospotted mites (9) usually cause problems in late summer. European red mites cause early season injury. Mites are about 1/50 inch long and vary in color. Feeding on lower leaf surfaces, they remove plant sap through their needle-like mouthparts. A fine webbing may appear on the underside of leaves, which turn bronze as feeding continues.

Grape berry moth larvae (10) web fruit together. Grapes turn dark purple and drop from stems when about pea size. A second generation eats holes in nearly ripened fruit.

Oriental fruit moths (11) cause injury similar to codling moths. They are not a problem in Wisconsin.

Peachtree borers (12) affect cherry and plum trees. Larvae feed just beneath the bark, destroying living tissue and sometimes girdling the trunk and main roots. Gum masses often exude from the feeding area. A more serious pest in Wisconsin is the lesser peachtree borer.

For additional information on fruit insects and their control, see Apple Pest Control for Home Gardeners (A2179); Plum, Cherry, and Peach Pest Control for Home Gardeners (A2130); Tree Fruit Insects (NCR 63).
COMMON FRUIT INSECTS

For safe and effective use of insecticides, always identify the problem correctly.

1. Codling moth adult and new larval entry, and damaged or “wormy” apple

2. Apple maggot in apple, and blotching and streaking of maggot-infested fruit

3. Red-banded leaf roller and damage

4. Green fruitworm

5. Rosy apple aphid, and deformed fruit shown with normal apples for comparison

6. San Jose scale on apple

7. Cherry fruit fly maggot

8. Plum curculio adult and egg-laying slit on cherry, and curculio larva in plum


10. Grape berry moth larva and damage

11. Oriental fruit moth. Twig damage and larva in peach.

12. Peach tree borer and pupa

Prepared by Extension Entomologists of the North Central States in cooperation with the Federal Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture