

EUROPEAN CHERRY FRUIT FLY (*Rhagoletis cerasi*)

The European cherry fruit fly (ECFF) is a serious pest of cherry crops. It is native to Europe and Asia and was detected in 2016 in Canada and 2017 in New York. It has the potential to spread and disrupt cherry production in the US. The fly can be spread to new areas through the transport of infested fruit or soil.

Adults are 3-4 mm in length. They are primarily black and have a yellow to orange head with a yellow dot on their back. The wings are transparent with several dark, distinct bands.

ECFF has a narrow host range of cherry (*Prunus* spp.) and honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.) The adults emerge in late May to early July and have one generation per year. Females start laying eggs in mid-June and can lay 30 to 200 eggs, usually one per fruit. They prefer to deposit eggs in fruits that are in full sun, and mainly on mid to late season fruit varieties. After the eggs hatch, the larvae develop and feed inside the fruit for up to 6 weeks. Mature larvae exit through the fruit and burrow into the ground, where they will overwinter in the soil underneath the host plant.

Damage to fruit occurs when eggs are laid in the fruit and larvae develops inside. Fruit



Figure 1. Female *Rhagoletis cerasi* on cherry (Photo © OPIE/Rémi Coutin)

often rots due to damage and may darken and fall off the tree. Mature fruit may be unmarketable due to soft spots and a wilted appearance. Exit holes left by larvae are also visible.

Yellow sticky traps baited with ammonium acetate lures are used to lure and trap ECFF to monitor for its presence. Early detection is key to controlling the potential damage and spread of this pest. If seen, it should be reported to the state plant health director or regulatory official.

Source: APHIS PPQ Pest Alert, CAPS Pest Datasheet