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Fruit fly control with Rogor 40 and Lebaycid: progress report

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THE Mediterranean fruit fly has been present in Western Australia for over 60 years and during that time many types of insecticides have been tested against the pest. Traps and lures were amongst the earliest control measures adopted, but these gave way to sugar solutions poisoned with such materials as arsenic and sodium fluosilicate.

More recently it has been shown that certain protein substances as well as sugar play an important part in the diet of fruit flies and that hydrolysed protein and Malathion make a very effective bait.

The recently developed Malathion yeast preparations are an important step forward in fruit fly control but of equal importance is the development of several chemicals which render the flesh of treated fruits toxic to both fruit fly eggs and young maggots.

The first of these materials to be tested was Dipterex and this has already been included in Departmental recommendations. The two latest preparations tested are Rogor 40 and Lebaycid.

These two newly developed organophosphorus compounds act in much the same manner as Dipterex. They are effective in killing the larvae and preventing egg development in fruit. However unlike Dipterex they are able to kill the immature stages in citrus. This, coupled with good residual properties and toxicity to adult flies make them very valuable weapons against fruit flies.
As neither Rogor 40 nor Lebaycid has been available for an entire season it has not been possible to finalise recommendations, nor to test one material against the other. This however, will be remedied as soon as possible during the coming season.

Preliminary tests were undertaken in the laboratory by dipping infested fruit into a range of dilute solutions. Loquats, mandarins and cumquats were used in the tests with Lebaycid but only loquats were available for the Rogor 40 dips.

Field trials using Lebaycid as a cover spray were made on a number of early apricots and peaches and cumquats were treated throughout the season. Where normal quantities of insecticide were applied excellent results were achieved.

Rogor 40 was used to spray three varieties of late canning peaches, some blocks of Bartlett and Keiffer pears and several individual trees of other pear varieties. A range of citrus including mandarins, navel oranges and grapefruit were also treated.

Results were assessed by examining most or all of the crop, sorting for struck and clean fruit and holding the struck fruit for records of fly development. Practically the entire crop from sprayed trees was suitable for marketing despite the fact that in most years almost all the fruit was ruined by fruit fly attack.

For those growers wishing to try Rogor 40 or Lebaycid it is suggested that they use the concentrations recommended by the manufacturers. Effectiveness can be expected to last for at least two weeks and probably three; a single spray at the first sign of strikes should be sufficient for early stone fruit but two sprays may be necessary for other fruit.

As in the case of most insecticides certain routine precautions are necessary when handling fruit fly sprays. The instructions printed on the labels should be read carefully and followed in detail. This applies particularly to the use of Lebaycid in the vicinity of poultry or other birds.
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