

Ontario Department of Agriculture

ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

Cherry Fruit-Flies

BY

L. CAESAR AND G. J. SPENCER

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There are two species of Cherry Fruit-flies in Ontario that have been causing much loss to cherry growers. They are not new insects, but their identity as pests was not known until the years 1910 and 1912 respectively.

These insects are distributed here and there over all the Niagara district, and probably in many of the other cherry districts of the province.

The injury is caused by the flies laying their eggs just beneath the skin, and the maggots or larvae that hatch from these feeding on the juice of the cherry and destroying the pulp by tearing it apart with small black hooks which act as jaws. The percentage of wormy cherries in infested orchards varies from 5 to 99 per cent. Many otherwise good orchards are sometimes so badly infested that the fruit cannot be picked. Wormy cherries are subject to Brown Rot and help to spread this disease to those that are not wormy. The sale of wormy cherries injures the market for good cherries by making people afraid to buy them, because often it is almost impossible to tell whether a cherry is wormy or not until it is opened. The total loss from the flies in some years amounts to several thousand dollars each year, but is much less some years than in others. Varieties like Early Richmond and early sweet cherries are almost exempt from attack, but all later sour and sweet cherries are infested, especially Montmorency and Morello. So far as known no other orchard fruit is subject to injury from the pest.

The adult insects are two-winged flies, about two-thirds the size of a House-fly. The wings are conspicuously marked by dark crossbands. Near the centre of the back is a little cream or yellow dot. The head and legs are yellow and the body black, or mostly black, except that one species has four white bands across the abdomen of the female, and three across that of the male. The other species has the abdomen entirely black. Consequently it is proposed to call the first species the White-banded Cherry Fruit-fly and the other the Black-bodied Cherry Fruit-fly.

The flies of the latter species appear on the trees about a week earlier in spring than those of the former. In Niagara they may usually be seen about the end of the first week in June, the other species about June 11th. The adults probably