

Tyfu Cymru Fact Sheet: Other Soft Fruit Pests

Below are some of the common pests found within soft fruit crops, if seen it is best to consult a BASIS trained advisor on how to proceed.

For more information please see the AHDB's crop walker guides at: <https://horticulture.ahdb.org.uk/publication-category/crop-walkers-guides?page=2>

Black Vine weevil

Can be a very damaging pest to soft fruit crops, the adults are often difficult to find but do little damage. The larvae live in the root zone and can lead to plant death.



Adult Black vine weevil



Black vine weevil larvae



Example of leaf knotting

Pest: **Black Vine weevil**

Size: **8-12mm long**

Habitat: **Adults hide in sheltered areas during the day, active in the crop at night. Larvae are in the root zone.**

Period of damage: **Late summer to winter for larvae.**

Damage symptoms: **Knotching on leaves by adults, larvae cause week growth, stunting and plant death.**

- All vine weevil are female and can lay 200-400 eggs in a season.
- Entomopathogenic nematodes species like *Steinernema kraussei*, *Heterorhabditis megidis* and *Heterorhabditis bacteriophora* targeted at larvae in the root zone are the best form of control.
- They can be transmitted across a nursery on crates, people's clothes and shoes. This leads to arrival in previously clean areas of crop.

Strawberry Blossom Weevil

The strawberry blossom weevil is a primary pest of strawberry. It is also an increasingly important pest of raspberry in some areas. Most crops can withstand small numbers of weevils but will struggle with large numbers early in the season.



Showing an adult blossom weevil on a flower.



Showing withered fruits that have been partially severed.

Pest: **Strawberry Blossom weevil**

Size: **2-4mm**

Habitat: **Around the flowers.**

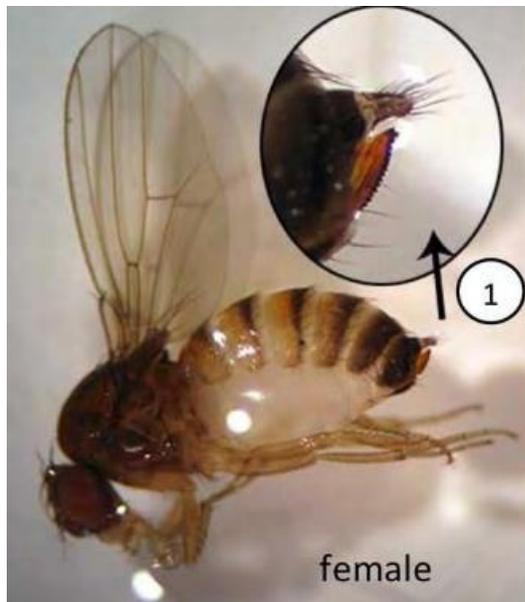
Period of damage: **Mid May to late summer**

Damage symptoms: **Partially severed/ wilted flower heads.**

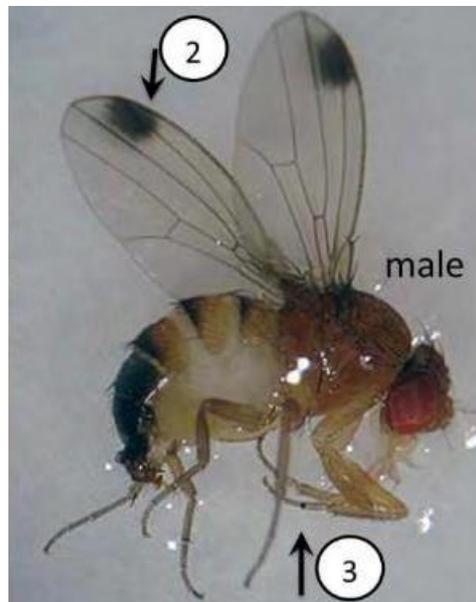
- After laying an egg in an unopened flower bud the female will partially sever the stalk stopping the flowers development and giving the larvae a source of food.
- There is an aggregation pheromone trap to help monitor the crop. It is best to inspect plants close to field boundaries/hedgerows where the adults will overwinter. It is also important to ensure staff are trained to detect their presence.
- It is best to use available chemical methods early before most of the flower buds open.

SWD: Spotted Wing Drosophila

This can be a very damaging pest to soft fruit crops, the females cut a hole in fresh fruit to lay eggs in. The eggs then hatch into larvae which develop inside the fruits, these are a contaminant and can collapse the fruit.



A female with saw toothed ovipositor (1)



A male with distinctive black spot (2) and combs on legs (3)



Showing larvae emerging from a raspberry fruit.



An example of collapsed fruit due to feeding.

Pest: **Spotted wing drosophila**

Size: **2-4mm in length**

Habitat: **Crops and wild hosts (e.g. brambles and wild blackberry.)**

Period of damage: **Medium risk from June to November**

Damage symptoms: **Mouldy and rotten fruit, fruit with puncture holes.**

- This pest is similar in appearance to many other fruit flies, males have a distinctive spot on each wing and the females have a saw shaped egg laying organ (ovipositor).
- SWD can be difficult to control, good crop hygiene and trapping can offer some protection, careful insecticide applications offer more control.
- Timing for insecticide is very important, the larvae and eggs are protected inside the fruit. Use of traps when the temperature is above 10°C can help time sprays when adults are present.
- Pick fruit when ripe, don't allow old or damaged fruit to remain within or around the crop as it will attract SWD.

SWD Photograph Credit – Adapted from Sheila Fitzpatrick, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre, Agassiz.