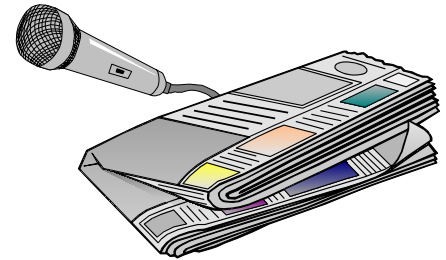




Agriculture Home Economics 4-H

GLENN COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION NEWS FLASH



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Bill Krueger, UC Farm Advisor Glenn County

Backyard and Roadside Olive Trees Pose Risk to Local Olive Industry

In Glenn and Tehama counties approximately 12,000 acres are devoted to the production of table olives, reports UC Farm Advisor Bill Krueger. The value of the industry to the local economy is estimated to be 175 million dollars. The recent infestation and population development of olive fly poses a serious threat to the survival of this industry. The olive flies lay eggs in the fruit which hatch into maggots, that tunnel into the fruit. Because of the difficulty of reliably sorting out infested fruit and the resulting risk of damage to their ability to market the olives, olive processors are currently unwilling to accept fruit with any level of infestation. In 2003, olive processors quit accepting fruit from Butte County due to unacceptable levels of infestation. Additionally, at least 25 growers delivered fruit from Glenn and Tehama Counties which were infested with olive fly.

Roadside, backyard or ornamental olive trees are a risk to the survival of the industry. If olive fly populations are allowed to develop unchecked on these trees their numbers will build to astronomical proportions. Because the olive fly is a strong flier, these high populations will easily disperse to commercial plantings and may overwhelm the ability of commercial growers to adequately control them in their orchards.

Owners of non-commercial olive trees have a responsibility to their friends and neighbors, many of whom rely on the table olive industry for their livelihood, to not allow their trees to contribute to the build up of the olive fly population.

The most reliable, least expensive way to be sure that your trees do not contribute to this problem is to remove them. This is a one time expense and will require no further effort after the trees are removed. Removed trees can be replaced by selected ornamental trees which will not have the messy fruit problem associated with olives. If you have to have an olive tree, there are fruitless varieties available which will not contribute to the problem because fruit are necessary for the completion of the olive fly life cycle. If you live in Glenn County and would like advice or assistance with tree removal contact the Glenn County Olive Pest Management District at 934-6501.

If you want to keep your trees and control the pest following are some things that will help.

Eliminate or reduce fruit set by spraying at full bloom with plant growth regulators such as Florel or Fruit Stop (available at garden supply stores). Unfortunately these products are often not 100 per cent effective and some fruit may remain which will need to be removed by hand.

Spray to control olive fly. This will require numerous annual sprays. Commercial growers start spraying about two weeks prior to fruit pit hardening (about the middle of June) and spray every other tree once a week through harvest (October). GF 120, a bait formulation which contains Spinosad, a biological insecticide derived from a fungal fermentation, is the only material currently available for control of olive fly in California. A different formulation with the same active ingredient is available locally for homeowners through Simplot Soil Builders in Orland or John Taylor Fertilizers in Willows.

Sanitation. Before harvest, pick up and destroy fallen fruit to help control olive fly populations. After harvest, remove fruit remaining on the tree and pick up and destroy fallen fruit by bagging and disposing of at the county landfill or by burying at least four inches under the soil.

More information on olive fly can be found on the web at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu or www.ucsonoma.ucdavis.edu. For specific advice on controlling the fly contact your local UC Extension Office.

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