

Plum Fruit Moth



The Plum Fruit Moth is a common pest attacking plum, gage, damson and occasionally peach. The female lays her eggs at the base of the fruit stalk and the larvae hatches ten days later and immediately enters the fruit and burrows towards the stone. The larvae are 10-12mm long, reddish with a dark brown head. The damage caused to the fruits by the Red Plum Maggot is very similar to that caused by the Plum Fruit Sawfly but it occurs much later in the season.

DAMAGE

The Red Plum Maggot feeds within relatively large fruitlets. It makes a hole at the base of the plum and bores into the fruit. On entering the flesh, the young larva forms a narrow winding mine. The mine soon turns brown and is then clearly visible through the skin. From near the stalk the mine is extended to the centre of the fruit and as the larva grows the flesh around the stone is eaten and replaced by wet, brown frass. When fully fed the larva escapes through the side of the fruit, leaving a small circular hole in the skin. Attacked fruits ripen early and are easily recognised amongst the developing crop.

CONTROL

Non Chemical Control

Plum Fruit Moth traps (available from Ken Muir) use the 'pheromone' scent of the female moth to attract and catch male moths (without attracting beneficial insects). This greatly reduces egg-laying and therefore the number of maggots. Traps should be installed soon after the end of May. If spring weather is exceptionally warm, or in sheltered urban gardens, it may be advantageous to have the traps installed by mid May. One trap will protect up to three average size trees for an entire season within a range of 15m (50ft) of the trap.



Chemical Control

Plum Fruit Moth caterpillars can only be controlled with insecticides before they enter the fruits, but it is difficult to be exact about timing as some years hatching may be earlier or later, due to weather conditions. It is therefore advisable to use a **Plum Fruit Moth Trap** to monitor and accurately determine the best time to use insecticide treatments by counting the number of trapped males every week and following the instructions that come with the trap. Once the best time for using an insecticide is determined spray with Deltamethrin (Bayer 'Provado Ultimate Fruit & Vegetable Bug Killer') or Bayer 'Sprayday Greenfly Killer') or Lambda Cyhalothrin (Westland 'Resolva Bug Killer' with a second application about three weeks later according to the manufacturers instructions. These sprays may also give some control of plum sawfly if applied just after petal fall. Continue to inspect the traps regularly and apply repeat spray applications if further catches are made.

USE CHEMICALS SAFELY: ALWAYS READ THE LABEL

When using chemicals it is most important to follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Only use on the fruits that are listed on the manufacturer's label. An accurate weighing machine and measuring cylinder should be obtained. Chemicals can be wasted by making concentrations unnecessarily strong or by making them too weak and ineffective. Furthermore, if chemicals are too strong they may cause damage to the foliage.