

Tortrix Moth

There are many different species affecting both top fruits and soft fruits.

DAMAGE

On strawberries, the young caterpillars which have black heads and bodies that are white, green or grey, depending upon the species, cause most trouble during April and May. They spin the leaves together with silken threads and feed on the leaf blades. A number of caterpillars bore through the sepals and petals of the unopened flower buds and feed on the ovaries, stigmas and stamens. The flowers open in the normal way but the berries are distorted and susceptible to Grey Mould infection.

On blackcurrants they live similarly on leaves at the tips of the new shoots, spinning the leaves together and killing the growing points as a result of which the shoots start to branch. This does not reduce the crop but it is a nuisance to have a lot of forked branches.

On cane fruits the caterpillars spin the leaves together at the tips of the new cane and fruiting laterals. This is seldom harmful and shoots and laterals usually grow away from the trouble.

The larvae of the fruit tree tortrix moth emerges in late March, boring in to fruit buds, often totally destroying them. They then feed on developing leaves, often spinning them together. This is usually of little or no consequence. They commence to pupate from late May between the spun leaves. Large numbers of moths are on the wing in late June or July. They lay their eggs in flat green patches on the leaves. In the autumn, the larvae often damage mature or maturing apples, biting irregular pits in the skin. Similar damage is caused to other top fruits, but less frequently.

CONTROL:

Light infestations can be controlled by gently squashing the bound leaves with your fingers to crush the concealed caterpillars and any pupae present.

Unfortunately there is not an insecticide available to the amateur gardener that is listed for control of this pest on strawberries, however an organic spray containing pyrethrum ([Pyrol Bug & Larvae Killer](#) or Defenders Bug Killer) or alternatively synthetic products containing deltamethrin ([Bayer Provado® Ultimate Fruit & Vegetable Bug Killer](#) or [Bayer Sprayday Greenfly Killer](#)) have all been approved for use on strawberries and should give some level of control. Spray early before the caterpillars spin the leaves together. The buds of the flower trusses should be sprayed as they separate from each other and the application repeated again after ten to fourteen days, following the manufacturers' guidelines with regards to intervals between spraying.

On cane fruits and blackcurrants treatment is seldom required, but if deemed necessary they too can be sprayed with the products mentioned above.

Deltamethrin ([Bayer Provado® Ultimate Fruit & Vegetable Bug Killer](#) or [Bayer Sprayday Greenfly Killer](#)) can be used on apple and pear trees to control the fruit tree Tortrix moth. Trees should be sprayed two or three times commencing June or early July and repeated at two or three week intervals according to the manufacturers' guidelines.

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.