

# Stop

# The Invasion



Photographs courtesy of Washington State Department of Agriculture, and Joseph Berger, Bugwood.org

## Exotic Apple Fruit Pests

*Apple Maggot,  
Rhagoletis pomonella*

Report  
Sightings

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[invasivespecies.wa.gov](http://invasivespecies.wa.gov)

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### What are they?

The apple maggot is an insect native to eastern North America. It is considered one of the worst apple pests in the world, and is a major threat to Washington apple production. It is a pest of many varieties of fruit, but mainly threatens apples. Adult maggots lay eggs inside the fruit. The eggs then hatch into young worms and consume the fruit, causing softening and decay.

### Are they here yet?

Apple maggot was first found in Clark County in 1980. It currently can be found in 22 of Washington's 39 counties.

### Why should I care?

Exotic apple fruit pests can damage trees and shrubs, with impacts depending on the species. Invasive fruit pests pose a serious threat to our state fruit crops and commercial fruit industries. Apple maggots directly attack fruits such as apples, cranberries, cherries, pears, plums, and apricots, making them brown, mushy, and inedible. Exotic apple fruit pests also may attack other fruit trees, ornamentals, and other desirable plants.

### What should I do if I find one?

Report online at [www.invasivespecies.wa.gov](http://www.invasivespecies.wa.gov).

### How can we stop them?

Prevent spread by treating infestations and not transporting infested apples. Follow quarantine regulations (Revised Code of Washington 17.24.041). Contact your local Washington State University Extension office, master gardener, or Washington State Department of Agriculture about suspected insects.



Photograph courtesy of H.J. Larsen Bugwood.org

## What are their characteristics?

- Apple maggots are cream colored, maggot-shaped larvae that grow up to .25 inch when mature.
- Adults are also black bodied.
- Wing patterns are banded with black markings.
- It is easy to identify these flies to family but very difficult to identify the species. For identification of varied species, contact your local Washington State University Extension office online at <http://ext.wsu.edu/locations/index.html> or master gardener.

## How do I distinguish them from native species?

- There are some commonly occurring fruit flies that look similar, if not exactly like the apple maggot such as the snowberry maggot, walnut husk fly, and cherry fruit fly.
- Other worms inside apples can be confused with apple maggot; however caterpillars, like codling moths, feed in the apple's core while apple maggots feed on the fruit flesh.

## Where do I get more information?

- Washington State Department of Agriculture, [www.agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/InsectPests/AppleMaggot/](http://www.agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/InsectPests/AppleMaggot/)  
[www.agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/insectpests/Exotics/SpeciesOfConcern.aspx](http://www.agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/insectpests/Exotics/SpeciesOfConcern.aspx)
- Washington State University Extension, [www.cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb1928/EB1928.pdf](http://www.cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb1928/EB1928.pdf)

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