



Photo: Joseph Berger



Apple Maggot



Adult apple maggot.
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What Is It?

The apple maggot (*Rhagoletis pomonella*) 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. Adult maggots lay eggs inside the fruit. The eggs hatch into young worms and consume the fruit, causing softening and decay.

Is It Here Yet?

Apple maggot was first found in Clark County in 1980. Today, it is in twenty-two of Washington's thirty-nine counties.

Why Should I Care?

Exotic apple fruit pests can damage trees and shrubs and pose a serious threat to Washington's fruit crops and commercial fruit industries. The apple maggot directly attacks 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 Are Its Characteristics?

- The apple maggot larva is cream colored and grows up to ¼ inch when mature.
- The adult is black bodied.
- Wing patterns are banded with black markings.

- Related fruit flies look similar, and it can be difficult to identify species. For assistance, contact



the local Washington State University Extension office or master gardener.

How Do I Distinguish It 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. Check out this resource on common look-alikes: <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2083/2015/03/Apple-Maggot-Recognition-Homeowner.pdf>.
- Other worms inside apples may be confused with the apple maggot; however caterpillars, such as codling moths, feed in the apple's core while the apple maggot feeds on the fruit flesh.



Apple maggot larva. Photo: Whitney Cranshaw

How Can We Stop It?

- Treat infestations and do not transport infested apples.
- Follow quarantine regulations.
- Contact the local Washington State University Extension office, master gardener, or Washington State Department of Agriculture about suspected insects.



Internal damage to apples from apple maggots. Photo: Washington State Department of Agriculture

What Should I Do If I Find One?

Report immediately via the WA Invasives mobile app or reporting webform at <https://invasivespecies.wa.gov/report-a-sighting/>.