

## **EXOPEST NOTES ON VINEGAR FLIES (ALSO KNOWN AS BARFLIES)**

These small, flying insects are a nuisance in bars, restaurants, fruit shops, and homes, where they are attracted by yeast containing foods such as overripe fruit and vegetables, and by liquids such as beer, wine and fruit juice.

Liquid residue in bottles, cans and cartons attracts them, but they will lay their eggs in damp, soiled dishcloths, sponges and mops, the outside of wet beer lines in bars and in tiny pools of water on dirty floors.

The gelatinous biofilm (slime and scum) in drains, which is impervious to regular detergents, provides an ideal medium for their eggs and larvae to develop. During the warmer months it is common to see new flies emerging from dirty drains.

One female vinegar fly can produce over 500 eggs that will hatch in about 30 hours, and the new flies become sexually mature after about two days.

**Vinegar flies are the result of inadequate cleaning and housekeeping practices.**

### **ROUTINE CONTROL ACTIONS**

The most important factor in the eradication of vinegar flies is the **elimination of their breeding grounds and food supply.**

Since vinegar flies can travel long distances, their breeding ground may be **outside** the premises, e.g. where fruit and vegetable supplies or rubbish bins are kept.

The following routine actions are recommended:

- Remove overripe fruit and vegetables from the area and seal or refrigerate them.
- After use, remove all empty wine, beer and juice bottles, or rinse them immediately. Recycling is commendable, but it must be managed properly.
- Remove drain covers and clean the drains regularly and thoroughly using a round brush and, ideally, an active enzyme cleaner. (Ask Exopest for details).
- Wash all cleaning cloths, sponges and mops, using warm water and detergent, and **dry** them, or at least leave them soaking in a fresh, sanitizing solution.
- Remove any beer, wine and juice from bar surfaces, floors and walls, using a mild detergent. Check below beer lines for residues. Clean and **dry**, if possible.
- Use clean, dry rubbish bins with liners and lids.
- Use a good torch to inspect the floor under all equipment for rubbish and liquids.

**Exopest** can help you identify the source of the problem, and advise on effective solutions. In addition we may be able to:

- Install and service Electronic Fly Killers (EFK) with ultraviolet light tubes and either high voltage zappers or glue boards, to attract and kill vinegar flies.

Please note that EFKs *reduce the adult fly population*, which in turn reduces the number of eggs laid.

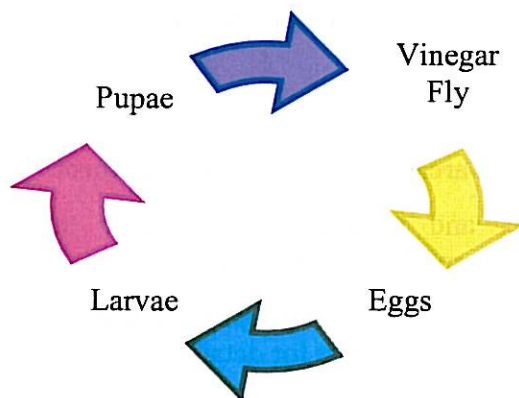
- Supply and service time-release insecticide dispensers to *reduce* the adult flies.
- Install flytraps with an attractant.
- Spray some problem areas with an appropriate insecticide.

### SUMMARY

**Vinegar flies cannot be eradicated without the removal of all breeding sites and the implementation of an effective cleaning routine.**

Some areas, e.g. floors, may need to be sealed with silicone, cement or other waterproof material to prevent water pools and damp patches. Good drainage is essential.

It is imperative that all staff members are aware of the problem, so they can make a concerted effort to improve the level of housekeeping and sanitation.



**The Life Cycle of Vinegar Flies**  
It takes only 8 days to complete



**Vinegar Fly:** photo by:  
Simon Hinkley & Ken Walker  
Museum Victoria