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## MEET THE DARK EYED FRUIT FLIES

### Meet the Dark-eyed Fruit Flies

If the fruit flies (*Drosophila*) in your accounts seem to be acting differently lately, it might be because you are dealing with a different fruit fly. *Drosophila melanogaster* is our most common fruit fly, *D. simulans* is very similar. Both are also called small fruit flies, red-eyed fruit flies, or vinegar flies. We are familiar with these two and their habits, but there is a new fly (or flies) in town...the dark-eyed fruit fly. Pest Control Operators are noticing this fruit fly more and more in commercial kitchen accounts and in hospitals, and they are discovering that treating it like a fruit fly doesn't always work.

To complicate things, right now there is no one particular species that is dubbed the dark-eyed fruit fly. It's more of a species complex that includes *D. Repleta*, *D. Hydei*, and *D. Robusta*. Here's how the dark-eyed fruit flies are different from the small fruit flies:

**Differences in Appearance-** The dark-eyed fruit flies are larger than *D. Melanogaster*, more the size of a phorid fly. Dark-eyed fruit flies have red eyes but they are a much darker red compared to the bright red eyes of *D. Melanogaster*. Dark-eyed fruit flies are brownish-black in colour, darker than the small fruit flies. The dark thorax may be mottled in appearance and the yellow abdominal bands are narrower than in *D. Melanogaster*.



Dark-eyed Fruit Fly  
*Drosophila* sp.

### Differences in breeding sites-

Dark-eyed fruit flies prefer decaying organic matter instead of decaying fruits and vegetables like *melanogaster*. They're often found breeding in the slime of dirty drains (like in drain or moth flies) or where scummy food and water collect. Dark-eyed fruit flies are reportedly more common in commercial kitchens than *D. Melanogaster* where they breed in and around floor drains, under broken floor tiles, in dirty feet of kitchen equipment, in beer taps, and in other wet areas that are difficult to clean. They also breed in manure and can be serious pests in poultry houses.

### Differences in Control-

If you determine that your fruit flies are dark-eyed fruit flies, you may need to attack them more like drain flies, using bacterial foam or gel drain cleaners and manual cleaning of drains. Deep cleaning to reach places not normally cleaned is crucial. For these flies, make sure that you include restrooms in your inspection, especially around urinals.

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