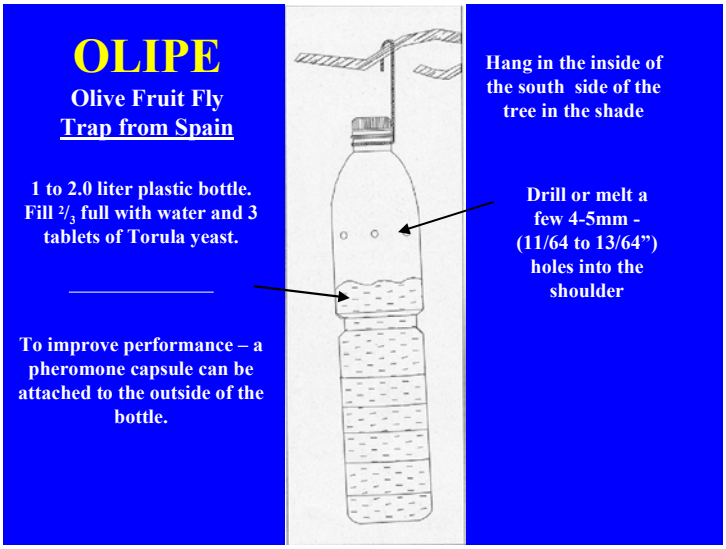
THE SPANISH "OLIPE" TRAP
FOR ORGANIC CONTROL OF OLIVE FRUIT FLY

December 2003

Several thousand certified organic acres in Spain have been using the OLIPE (Olivarera los Pedroches) trap for several years to control Olive Fruit Fly populations and to keep olive damage to below about 10%. In coastal California where temperatures are ideal for the development of very high fly populations, this trap has not been successful all by itself in controlling the olive fruit fly, but it can catch significant numbers of flies and maintain lower pressure. Fruit should be evaluated on a weekly basis for stings and larval damage in order to determine if there is a need to spray with GF-120 the only effective spray bait control material registered for olive fruit fly control in California.

Stings are easy to identify and quick to count, but stung fruit should also be checked to see if there is a live form of the insect present. Young larvae are very difficult to see, but as they get older and larger the feeding track is bigger and usually turns brown. When temperatures get above about 95°F the larval stage of the olive fruit fly is greatly impeded and is often killed inside the fruit, which can greatly reduce overall fly populations and damage. The threshold level of 3% live forms of the insect is a starting point that should be used to start sprays. Some growers, however, are using the OLIPE trap year round to keep the population level down, then start spraying at fruit pit hardening (mid June) every other week with GF-120 to prevent any significant damage.

The OLIPE trap is nothing more than a 1½ to 2 liter plastic bottle with 4-5mm (11/64 to 13/64) sized holes melted into the shoulder. It is filled about 2/3 full with water and 3 Torula Yeast Tablets. The flies are attracted to the yeast bait, crawl inside the bottle, and die. The holes can easily be made by taking a 11/64" to 13/64" size drill bit, hold it with a vise grips, heat it on a gas burner, and melt several holes into the bottle shoulder area. Hang the trap in the shade of the south side of the tree.



Research is being conducted in California on the effectiveness of this trap compared to other control methods. It is new and data from 2003 indicates that it is the most effective attractant trap compared to bottles filled with household ammonia, ammonium carbonate, or GF-120. It is low cost, low tech, and the most effective trap to date. Unfortunately, very few alternatives exist. Bottles with caps can be purchased from the local recycling center; the Torula yeast tablets can be purchased from ERA International Ltd. P.O. Box 7329, Freeport, NY 11520. (516) 379-5579.

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