

It's getting to be that time of year again with spotted wing drosophila making a mess of some of our fruit. What do you recommend for the small scale grower to do about this right now?

Fruit growers should take on spotted wing drosophila two ways. First is use of Entrust (spinosad) as a spray, while at the same time, removing the rotten and over-ripe fruit from the field and disposing of them, either by burial or throwing them away in a closed container to the extent possible. For strawberry growers, running the tractor over the culls in the furrow can be useful - not so much because it crushes the larvae, but because the flattened fruit dries out quickly and loses its property as a suitable food source. The use of the Entrust spray is reducing the number of adults, while at the same time, with the removal of fruit either by harvest or disposal, all routes of maturation are no longer available to the fly. Harvested fruit is removed and sold, and cull fruit is removed or destroyed, so there is no way for the larvae to complete their life cycle and turn into more flies.

Our research tells us to recognize that removal of cull fruit alone will not be enough to bring the population down to acceptable levels. There will always be the one fruit that is missed but yet contains the propagation potential in it to re-infest your field. That is why the best route for you is to spray along with practicing good sanitation.

Final word would be to take note of what is around your field. Are there any patches of uncontrolled spotted wing drosophila next door or wild blackberries? Both of these areas are serving as hosts and it will benefit you to get some control there also.

There is a pesticide mentioned in this article for control of spotted wing drosophila on the small scale. As always, before using such a pesticide, refer to the product label for directions on use.