

Growing Fruit Trees: Cherries

Proper Care of Trees for Noxious Pest Avoidance

Important Notice:

Before planting fruit trees, it is the residential growers responsibility to familiarize oneself with the RDOS [Bylaw](#). It is necessary that proper care of fruit trees is taken to prevent & control pest infestations.

Before Planting your Tree

Cherry trees can only produce healthy fruit if home growers pay careful attention to pruning, sanitation, pest management, & harvest practices. If you are planting the tree for shade or ornamental purposes, consider planting an ornamental tree that will be less bothersome, costly to care for & manage.

General Cherry Tree Care

Sanitation: Diligent sanitation practice will reduce the risk of pest infestation. Remove dead & decaying fruit & leaves from the tree & ground. Maintain a good weeding routine to avoid pests.

Pruning: Avoid pruning in fall or winter to avoid winter injury, which makes the tree more susceptible to pests. In early spring (before bud break & at least two weeks after last frost), remove all dead & diseased branches first. Prune the upper part of the tree more than the lower to maximize sunlight & airflow.

Thinning: Thin the fruit in April-May (10 cherries per spur) to reduce tree load, improve crop quality & prevent pests.

Harvesting: Remove ALL fruit at harvest (June-Aug) & make sure all diseased & insect-infested fruit is destroyed properly. Let red cherries ripen on the tree until dark in color. The ripening process is stopped once fruit is picked. For this reason, it is important to be diligent with picking to avoid fruit decomposition & pests.



Western Cherry Fruit Fly

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Pest Avoidance & Management

Important: Keeping trees healthy by prioritizing sanitation practice will help reduce pest & disease problems. Avoid chemical intervention (pesticides) & use preventative strategies first.

Netting Tree: Place netting around the tree each year to reduce the risk of pests, disease, & damage from birds. Specially made small mesh nets for drosophila are recommended (Kootenay Covers).

Pesticides (last resort): If preventative measures are no longer adequate, consult professionals before use. Always begin with the least toxic product available first.

Pesticide Stewardship: Do not apply in daytime when bees are foraging, when wind speeds are high, or when rain is forecast.

MOST COMMON CHERRY TREE PESTS

Spotted Wing Drosophila

(25mm = 1 inch)



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BC Ministry of Agriculture

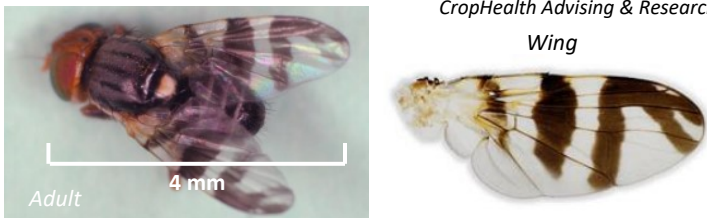
Identification: Appears similar to other fruit flies but is continuous throughout the season, & must be routinely monitored. Males have a dark spot on each wing. Frequent checks for damage holes should be done before harvest.

Management: Effective sanitation & harvest practices are the best strategy. Seal infested fruit in plastic bags or garbage bags, and place in the sun for a week in the sun before disposal at local landfill.

Western Cherry Fruit fly



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Identification: There is no visible indication of this pest until maggots are nearly mature & exit holes appear. This pest is annual & active during the summer. Once out of the fruit, they fall to the soil to burrow & overwinter.

Management: Consider netting the tree with specially designed "Kootenay Covers" before indication of fruit fly presence. Remove all fruit before larvae emerge & destroy all fruit left on the tree after harvest.

Black Cherry Aphid



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Identification: Nymphs & adults are both dark brown or black in color & is the only dark-colored aphid that attacks cherries. Check for curled leaves & honeydew.

Management: Examine trees after bud break for aphid presence. Avoid excess nitrogen application that attracts aphids. Avoid pesticide use as it often kills beneficial insects like ladybugs that are important in aphid control.

Additional Info

Other Pests to Look out for

Shothole Borer, Pear Slug/ Sawfly, Ambrosia Beetle, Leafrollers, Mites, Scale Insects etc.

More Detailed Pest Descriptions Found Here

[Home & Garden Pest Management Guide for BC Pests of Fruit Trees.](#)

Okanagan Invasive Species Online

This is a useful resource for information on all invasive insect pests of concern in the region. This can be found at: www.OISO.ca



Plant Me Instead Factsheet

For ornamental & native tree or shrub alternatives for fruit bearing trees & shrubs, visit [Tree Fruit Pest Control | RDOS](#)

Little Cherry Disease

We are in a **high risk** area for the disease. Routinely check for small fruits that fail to fully ripen, lack flavor, have dull color, or have early leaf reddening. Refer to the [Little Cherry Control Regulation – BC Laws](#), outlining your responsibility to prevent & control the disease. Contact the [Plant Health Laboratory](#) if disease is suspected.

Contact your local nursery/ greenhouse if you are unsure about what management strategy should be practiced & how to properly care for your fruit tree.

Noxious Pest Program Video Media:

[Regional District Okanagan Similkameen \(RDOS\) - YouTube](#)