

Fruit Flies: Discourage An Annoying Pest

Try these nontoxic solutions to keep invasive fruit flies away from your bird's cage.

By Susan Chamberlain

Fruit flies are attracted to food in your bird's area. Regularly clean your bird's cage to discourage these pests.

Fruit flies attracted to food in your pet bird's area or room are annoying. They hover over fruit bowls, houseplants, and of course, bird cages. They're smaller than gnats and no-see-ums, but you can control them! The tiny creatures we call fruit flies belong to the order Diptera. We most often see the variety known as the vinegar fly. They thrive on overripe, rotting or fermenting fruits.

Take the following steps to rid you and your bird's home of fruit flies. Fruit flies gravitate toward garbage. Dispose of discarded fruit in tightly closed containers or by putting it down an in-sink garbage disposal. Wipe kitchen counters and wash cutting boards and utensils immediately after preparing your bird's fruit and vegetables. Even a tiny bit of sticky residue will attract resident fruit flies. Keep fruit in the refrigerator rather than in a bowl on the kitchen counter. If you must keep fruit out, check it frequently. As soon as it begins to age, the flies will return. Empty and wash your birds' fruit dishes after several hours. Change the paper liner on the bottom of the bird cage, and wipe fruit fragments from cage bars, floors and walls. No food, no fruit flies. Pour ½ an inch of red wine or beer into a bottle with a tall neck, and put it where flies congregate. They'll enter and drown in the liquid. Fruit flies like calm, still air. Keep air currents moving with a ceiling, counter or window fan. (Be sure to keep your birds away from fans.) Reduce gnat populations by locating your houseplants in well-ventilated areas. Keep soil free of leaves and other debris. Top off houseplant soil with a layer of bird gravel for a neat, clean look. Color attracts fruit flies. Use an Agro-BioTech Fruit Fly Trap, which uses color (and no toxic chemicals!) to attract the bugs to a sticky glue, where they are trapped and killed. Add bait, such as beer or a slice of tomato or banana to the trap, to attract and kill more flies faster. Eliminate fungus gnats, those insidious little critters hovering around your houseplants with Bug Stix sticky traps.