Rhagoletis cingulata (the eastern cherry fruit fly) is native to North America, but has been present in continental Europe since the 1980s, and is now found in at least 11 countries. Following a suspect finding in East Suffolk in 2017, a study will take place in summer 2018 to determine if this was an isolated incident.

Its main hosts are: Prunus avium (sweet cherry), P. cerasus (sour cherry) and P. salicina (Japanese plum), and in the USA the wild host is P. serotina. Some sources suggest Pyrus communis (pears) may be also occasionally attacked.

Adult flies lay eggs via puncturing the surface of the fruit. The main damage is caused by the larvae, which burrow into the flesh and feed around the pit and pulp. As infestation progresses, sunken spots appear, the pulp turns brown and the fruit can ripen earlier.

The most likely pathway for introduction to the UK is infested fruit from Europe.

There have been two suspected findings of this pest in the UK; in July 2016, a single fly, believed to have been associated with discarded fruit, was trapped in Dorset; and in July 2017 a single fly was found in East Suffolk.

Fig. 1. *Rhagoletis cingulata* species group adult © Jeff Higgott

Fig. 2. *Rhagoletis cingulata* larva in sour cherry © H. Vogt, JKI Dossenheim

Fig. 3. Misshapen sour cherry and punctures © H. Vogt, JKI Dossenheim

If you suspect the presence of the *Rhagoletis cingulata*, please inform the relevant authority (see over for details).
For England and Wales, contact your local APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector, or the PHSI headquarters, in York:
Tel: 01904 405138
Email: planthealth.info@apha.gsi.gov.uk
Web: https://www.gov.uk/plant-health-controls

For Scotland, contact the Scottish Government’s Horticulture and Marketing Unit:
Email: hort.marketing@gov.scot
Web: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/plant/PlantHealth

For Northern Ireland, contact DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch:
Tel: 0300 200 7847
Email: planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk
Web: www.daera-ni.gov.uk