

Pest Alert: *Rhagoletis cingulata*



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

- *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 12 countries. Following a suspect finding in East Suffolk in 2017, a study was undertaken in summer 2018 which found no further *R. cingulata*.
- 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* (**black cherry**). Some sources suggest *Pyrus communis* (**pears**) may be also occasionally attacked.
- Adult flies (**Fig 1**) lay eggs via puncturing the surface of the fruit. The main damage is caused by the larvae (**Fig 2**), 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 early (Fig 3)**.
- The most likely pathway for introduction to the UK is via **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.

If you suspect the presence of the pest, please inform the relevant authority (see over for details).

For finds at garden centres, plant nurseries, commercial orchards or private gardens in England and Wales, contact your local APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector, or the PHSI headquarters, in York:

Tel: 0300 1000 313 (please select option 3 when calling)

Email: planthealth.info@apha.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

For finds in the wider environment:

<https://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk/>