


South Africa is starting its winter fruit fly offensive, releasing millions of sterile male insects distributed by helicopter to mate with females in a bid to reduce the population. 

A sugar solution is spread over fruit trees as bait to attract the females who will then mate with the males and produce sterile eggs dramatically cutting numbers.

FruitFly Africa chair Anton Rabe, said it was also important to gain co-operation of the local community.

"There is no single silver bullet approach that works. We need integrated, area-wide and coordinated action by all stakeholders. Not just from producers, but also communities, hence the drive to include towns," said Rabe, who is also Hortgro executive director.

He said in winter months fruit flies migrate from bare orchards to house gardens where there are potentially rich pickings from fallen berries such as rose hips.

FruitFly Africa is appealing to local residents to pick-up fallen fruit, rose hips and bird droppings, put them into plastic bags and leave in direct sunlight to kill any insects present.

"We need to get rid of them in these concentrated places in order to start the next summer with as low a population as possible. For this we need town dwellers to assist and be FruitFly "wise" and aware," said Rabe.

FruitFly Africa estimates the insects are decreasing the world's food supply by at least 25% annually and any fruit shipments found with infestations would immediately be rejected for export.

Photo: Laopinion.cl

www.freshfruitportal.com