

CODLIN MOTH

Codlin moths are a seasonal pest which will emerge over the next few weeks and start off another cycle of damage. When the adult pests actually emerge, will depend on the weather and the amount of warmth, October, November and December are the normal months of activity.

The codlin moth emerges after apples, pears and walnuts fruit have set on the trees. Coming out from their cocoons they are active at dusk, when temperatures are over 15 degrees.

The adult moths mate and each female can lay up to 300 eggs on the foliage of the host trees.

The eggs hatch after 10-14 days and head for the nearest young fruit, where they eat a hole and tunnel into the centre, doing the damage they are well know for. Knowing the above gives one a good indication of when best to use a control.

The first method is to obtain a codlin moth pheromone trap that lures the male moths to its sticky pad. (Many garden centres stock the traps.) The traps themselves are likely to reduce the instance of damage if set up about now. In a perfect world, if you were to catch all the male moths before they had a chance to mate, then the females would lay only infertile eggs. But as we can see, only one female needs to mate, to ruin up to 300 fruit! So the trap is not a perfect control but it is a fantastic monitor.

By checking the trap every couple of days one can determine when the moths are active and then start spraying about 7 days later.

An excellent alternative to a pheromone trap is to hang a small tin of treacle in the tree with the assistance of an onion bag. The treacle acts also as a pheromone trap which you can monitor.

What spray to use? In the past Carbaryl was widely recommended. It had the disadvantages of thinning the apples in early sprays, before the fruit developed enough, and it was a poison which did end up in your previously healthy apples.

Neem Tree Oil, having 1500 ppm of the active ingredient, prevents the hatched grubs from eating and growing, is a logical answer.

The whole tree need not be sprayed only the small fruit ensuring good coverage.

Note there are three **Neem Oil** products available in NZ, only one of which is registered for use on food crops. The cost of registration is very high and likewise the registered product is over triple the price of the non-registered ones. In Australia, **Neem Oil** is certified organic so it is then up to the user as to whether it is used or not.

Spraying starts 7 days after an influx of males is noted in the trap. (Without a trap start once the temperatures are about 15 degrees) Spray late in the day after the sun is off the trees and repeat every 7-10 days. Add **Raingard** to the spray to prevent washing off in rain and to give additional UV protection. (**MBL** can be added too)

If totally successful one should only find a pin prick scar on fruit, at maturity (where the grub took its first and only bite)

A few gardeners have reported successes of less damage by sprinkling Epsom salts under the apple trees and lightly watering.

Others have sprinkled **Neem Tree Granules** which also appear to have reduced damage. Many of the codlin moths have pupated in the soil under the tree and if when they emerge they cannot locate the tree above because they cannot smell the tree, then they become confused and may leave the tree alone.

Marigolds or highly smelling plants can be planted under the tree to cause this to happen. Another old method is to let your chickens out to forage under the trees when the soil is moist in the winter time.

They will scratch out all the cocoons and eat the pupating grubs.

By stringing wire netting around the area where your trees are should confine the chickens and keep them from ruining other gardens and lawns.

If you have an apple, pear or walnut tree that has not had the problem in the past, then don't worry about any controls. If the problem develops in time to come, then you can do the above.

Problems ring me at 0800 466464 (Palmerston North 3570606)