

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 **England and Wales**, contact your local **APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector** or the **PHSI Headquarters**, York.

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

Email: planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk

For **Scotland**, contact the **Scottish Government's Horticulture and Marketing Unit**:

Agricultural crops contact the local RPID officer: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/AOcontacts/contacts>

For non-agricultural crops, email: hort.marketing@gov.scot

For **Northern Ireland**, contact the **DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch**:

Tel: 0300 200 7847 Email: planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk

Web: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health>

For additional information on UK Plant Health please see:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/uk-plant-health-risk-register/>

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/plant-health-controls>

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/plant/PlantHealth/PlantDiseases>

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk>