



IFAS EXTENSION

West Indian Fruit Fly, *Anastrepha obliqua* (Macquart) (Insecta: Diptera: Tephritidae)¹

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Introduction

The West Indian fruit fly, *Anastrepha obliqua* (Macquart), occurs throughout the Caribbean, south to southern Brazil. It is the most abundant species of *Anastrepha* in the West Indies and one of the most abundant species in Panama. *A. obliqua* is a major pest of mangoes in most tropical countries, making the production of some varieties unprofitable. Some varieties, however, are little damaged. It, like the Caribbean fruit fly, *A. suspensa* (Loew), also attacks other tropical fruits of little economic importance. *A. obliqua* has also been called the Antillean fruit fly.

A. obliqua was first discovered in Florida in 1930. As a result of that discovery, a large fruit fly survey and eradication campaign was conducted from 1930 until 1936. Eradication actions began in 1934 and included widespread fruit removal and destruction, and biweekly insecticidal sprays. During this time, numerous *A. obliqua* specimens were collected, all from Key West

A. obliqua is intercepted frequently in mangoes and several other fruits from various countries. There

are Florida records for several adult females in 1957 [since disputed - specimens were probably actually collected in 1935 (Steck 2001)] from Key West and one larva in mango from Ft. Lauderdale, June 25, 1963, which was identified by Dr. R.H. Foote as "*Anastrepha* species, possibly *mombinpraeoptans* (*obliqua*)." In fact this larva may have been a harbinger of the large colonization by Caribbean fruit fly, *Anastrepha suspensa* in south Florida, where adults were first detected in 1965 (Steck 2001).

There is no confirmed evidence of the presence of *A. obliqua* in Florida since 1935. Apparently, the control actions of 1931-1936 indeed eradicated this pest from Florida as no adult *A. obliqua* has ever again been detected in the field, despite the presence of many thousands of fruit fly detection traps that have been run throughout the Keys and peninsular Florida continuously and year-round since 1956 (Steck 2001).

Synonyms

Anastrepha obliqua was described originally by Seín in 1933 as a variety of *Anastrepha fraterculus*

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(Wiedemann). The type series was from Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. First reported from Florida in the early 1930s as an unnamed species.

The species has been widely known by its synonym, *A. mombinpraeoptans* Seín, or as a variety of the continental Neotropical species, *Anastrepha fraterculus* (Wiedemann) (Berg 1979, Weems 1970), and is one of several closely related species of *Anastrepha* (Weems 1980).

Anastrepha fraterculus var. *mombinpraeoptans* Seín, 1933

Anastrepha mombinpraeoptans Seín

Anastrepha acidusa authors (not Walker)

Anastrepha trinidadensis Greene, 1934

Anastrepha ethalea Greene (not Walker)

Anastrepha fraterculus var. *ligata* Costa Lima 1934

Acrotoxa obliqua (Macquart)

Tephritis obliqua Marquart

Trypeta obliqua (Macquart)

Distribution

Throughout the greater and lesser Antilles, Jamaica, Trinidad, the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, Mexico to Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador, and the vicinity of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Brazilian population may represent an introduction of the species at the port of Rio de Janeiro.

Identification

Adult

The adult is a medium sized yellow-brown fly. Mesonotum 2.6 to 3.3 mm long, yellow-orange, lateral stripe from just below transverse suture to scutellum, and scutellum pale-yellow; pleura yellow-brown, a stripe below notopleuron to wing base and metapleuron paler; metanotum orange-yellow. The sides usually somewhat darkened. Macrochaetae dark brown; pile

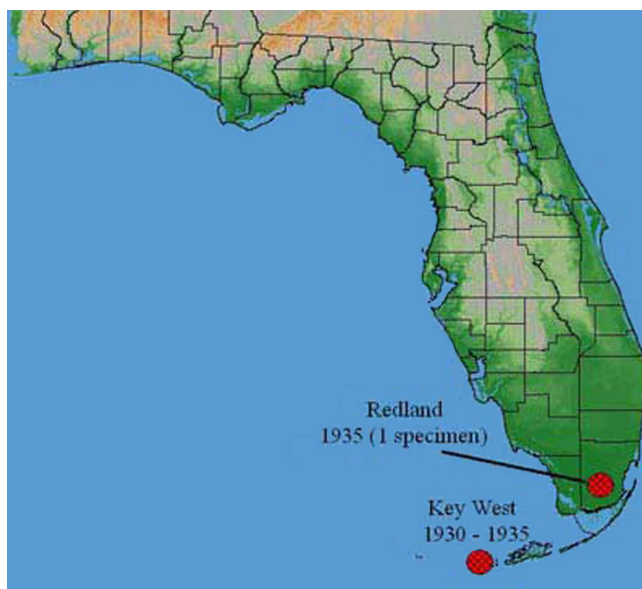


Figure 1. Incidence of the West Indian fruit fly, *Anastrepha obliqua* (Marquart), in Florida. Credits: Drawing by: G. J. Steck and B. D. Sutton, Division of Plant Industry.

predominantly dark brownish except for a pale-yellow pile of median thoracic stripe.

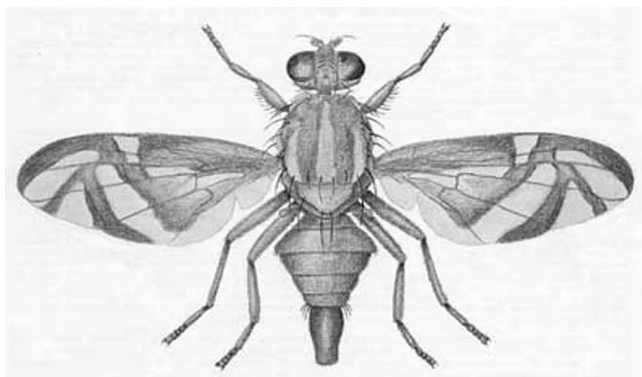


Figure 2. Adult female West Indian fruit fly, *Anastrepha obliqua* (Macquart). Credits: Division of Plant Industry

Wing 5.85 to 7.5 mm long, the bands yellow-brown, costal and S bands touching on vein R4+5; V band completely joined to S band, often broadly so. Ovipositor sheath of female 1.6 to 1.9 mm; ovipositor 1.3 to 1.6 mm long, moderately stout, the base distinctly widened, the tip rather short, tapering, with rather acute serrations on the apical two-thirds or more. *A. obliqua* bears a close resemblance to *A. fraterculus* (Wiedemann), but it may be distinguished by the differences in the ovipositor of the female and a combination of several characters.

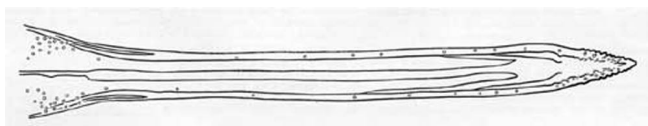


Figure 3. Ovipositor of West Indian fruit fly, *Anastrepha obliqua* (Macquart). Credits: Division of Plant Industry

The pile of the mesoscutum is sublaterally dark brownish black, of the median stripe yellowish white, the contrast very pronounced in *A. obliqua*, whereas in *A. fraterculus* the mesoscutellar pile is rather uniformly yellow-brown, that of the sublateral stripes scarcely darker than the ground color. The black area on the side of the metanotum of *A. obliqua* usually reduced and the inner margin of the black area are not sharply defined, the postscutellum not darkened laterally, the wing bands usually all connected, whereas in *A. fraterculus* the black on metanotum usually extensive, and the inner margin sharply defined, the postscutellum darkened laterally, and the wing bands often disconnected.

A. suspensa (Loew) also resembles *A. obliqua*, but differs from it in the same way as does *A. fraterculus*. Furthermore, *A. obliqua* lacks the pronounced median scutoscuteellar black spot typically found in *A. suspensa*.

Larva

Larva white; typical fruit fly shape (cylindrical-maggot shape, elongate, anterior end narrowed and somewhat curved ventrally, with anterior mouth hooks, ventral fusiform areas, and flattened caudal end); last instar larvae range in length from 8 to 10 mm; venter with fusiform areas on segments 2-10; anterior buccal carinae usually 9-10 in number; anterior spiracles asymmetrical in lateral view with center depressed, and with tubules averaging 12-14 in number.

Cephalo-pharyngeal skeleton with large pointed convex mouth hook each side, with rounded dorsal lobe, and each hook about 2.5X hypostome length; hypostomium with thin subhypostomium; post-hypostomial plates curved to dorsal bridge fused with prominent sclerotized rays of central dorsal wing plate; parastomium broadly elongate; dorsal wing plate with several prominent rays and strong sclerotization on ventral border; dorsal bridge relatively evenly sclerotized, merging to a strongly

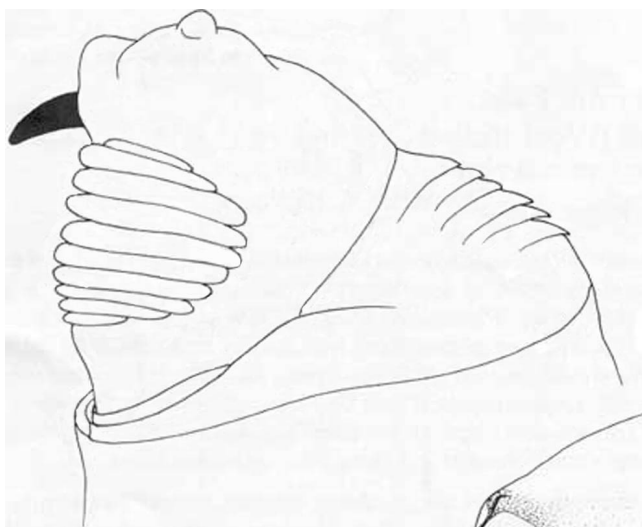


Figure 4. Larval head and buccal carinae of West Indian fruit fly, *Anastrepha obliqua* (Macquart). Credits: Division of Plant Industry

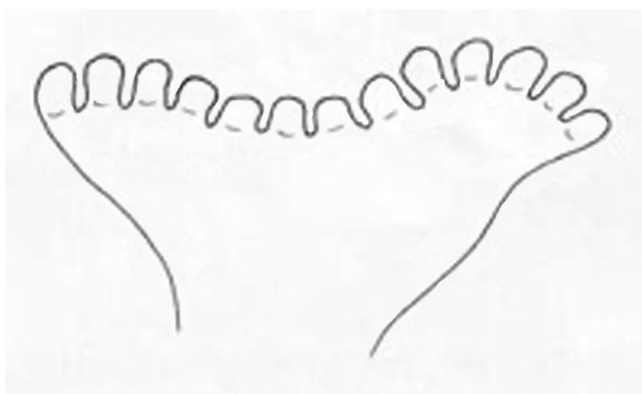


Figure 5. Anterior spiracles.

sclerotized dorsal edge of pharyngeal plate; a prominent hood on pharyngeal plate.

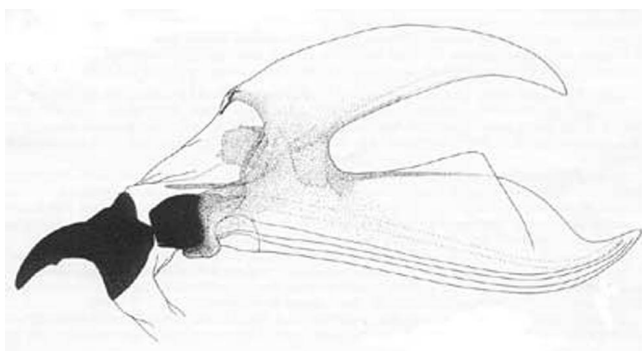


Figure 6. Larval cephalo-pharyngeal skeleton (left side) of West Indian fruit fly, *Anastrepha obliqua* (Macquart). Credits: Division of Plant Industry

Caudal end with paired dorsal papillules (D1 and D2) close together and angled about 45 degrees from each spiracular plate; intermediate papillules 3 in

number, with I1-2 in a nearly horizontal line on a slight elevation; I3 faint and distant dorso-laterally and nearer to L1 which is on dorso-lateral edge of caudal end; V1 faint and about twice as distant from I1-2 as from anal lobes; posterior spiracles as 3 elongated peritremes (length = 5X width) on each spiracular-plate, with ventral 2 peritremes angled to center from ventral direction and remaining peritreme angled from dorso-lateral angle; interspiracular processes (hairs) well developed, at 4 sites on each plate, and tips sometimes bifurcate; anal lobes entire.

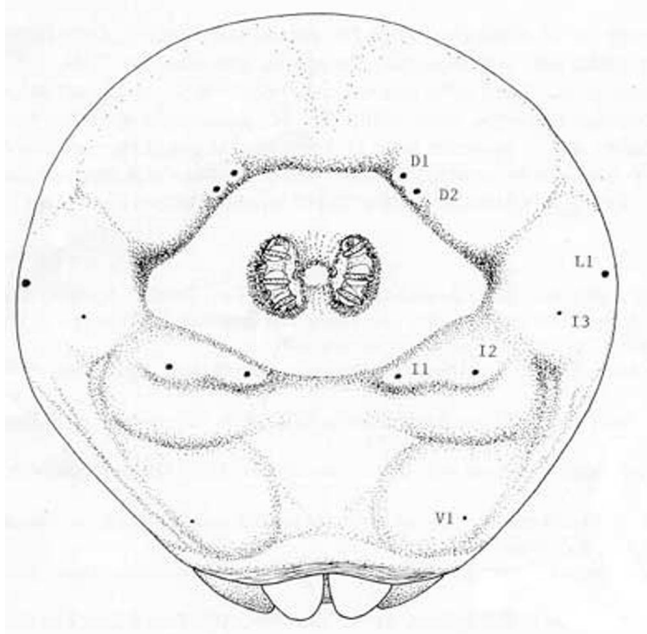


Figure 7. Caudal end of last instar larva of West Indian fruit fly, *Anastrepha obliqua* (Macquart). Credits: Division of Plant Industry

Anastrepha larvae in this species complex are all relatively similar but careful observations of the buccal carinae, anterior spiracles, and papillule position of the caudal end will distinguish the species (see Heppner 1984, 1990; Steck et al. 1990). *Anastrepha obliqua* has anterior spiracles like *Anastrepha ludens* (Loew) but with fewer tubules and *A. ludens* usually has the anal lobes bifid. *Anastrepha suspensa* (Loew) is more similar but has the anterior spiracles more symmetrical than *A. obliqua*. On the caudal end *A. ludens* and *A. suspensa* have I1-2 angled and not horizontal like *A. obliqua*, while in *Anastrepha interrupta* Stone there also is a faint I4 present. D1-2 are closer together in *A. obliqua* than in the other related species. *Anastrepha fraterculus* has

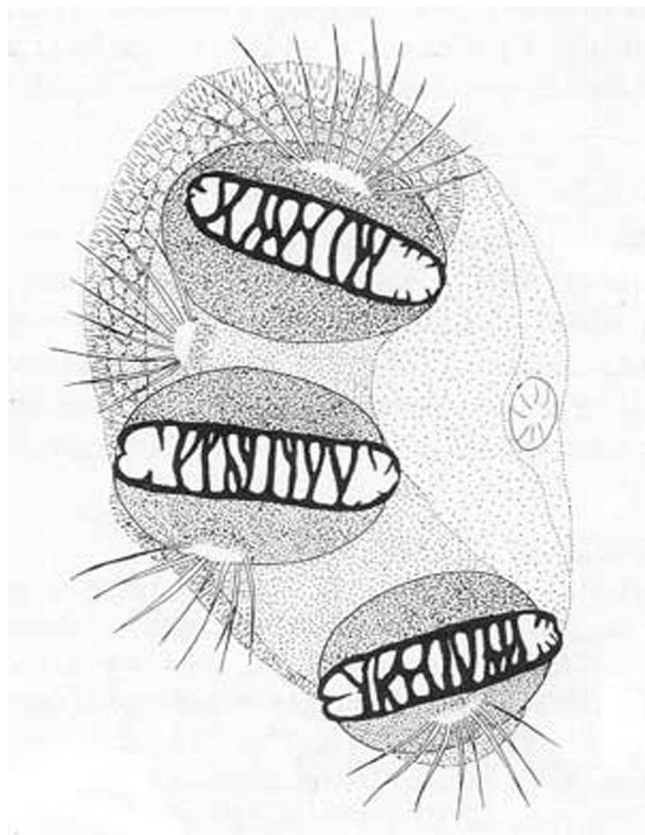


Figure 8. Larval anterior spiracles (left side) with detail of one peritreme of West Indian fruit fly, *Anastrepha obliqua* (Macquart). Credits: Division of Plant Industry

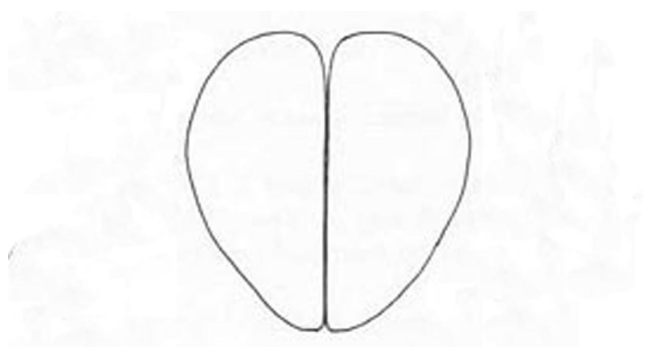


Figure 9. Anal lobes.

the anterior spiracles with a higher tubule number (15-17) than *A. obliqua*.

Life History

The preoviposition period in Puerto Rico varies from about a week in summer up to two to three weeks in winter. Eggs are laid singly, generally in mature green fruits except for some varieties of mangoes which may be attacked when they are very small. The larval stage lasts 10 to 13 days in summer, slightly longer in winter, and the pupal stage occupies

about the same length of time. Possibly six or seven generations develop annually.

Hosts

Numbers of host plants have been noted for the West Indian fruit fly but due to confusion between *A. obliqua* and *A. fraterculus*, and others in this species complex, it is unclear what the true host range is for each species. Weems (1980) noted numerous tropical fruit hosts for the "fraterculus complex." A long list of recorded hosts for the West Indian fruit fly was also noted by Norrbom and Kim (1988), with mango (*Mangifera indica* L.), guava (*Psidium guajava* L.), and hog plums (*Spondias* sp.) being most often mentioned. Citrus is sometimes attacked in Dominica, but never in Cuba, Guyana or Trinidad or Tobago.

Anacardium occidentale (cashew), *Annona hayesii*, *Averrhoa carambola* (carambola), *Citrus aurantium* (sour orange), *Citrus grandis* (pumelo), *Citrus x paradisi* (grapefruit), *Dovyalis hebecarpa* (kitambilla or Ceylon gooseberry), *Eriobotrya japonica* (loquat), *Eugenia jambos* (jambos, rose-apple, or pomarosa), *Eugenia malaccensis* (Malay-apple or pomerack), *Eugenia nesiotica*, *Mangifera indica* (mango), *Diospyros digyna* (black sapote), *Pouteria mammosa* (sapote), *Prunus amygdalus* (bitter almond), *Prunus dulcis* (almond), *Psidium guajava* (guava), *Spondias dulcis* (vi-apple or Otaheite-apple), *Spondias mombin* (yellow mombin), *Spondias nigrescens*, *Spondias purpurea* (purple or red mombin), *Coffea arabica* (arabica coffee). The species also has been reared experimentally from *Achras sapota* (sapodilla), *Annona glabra* (pond-apple), *Chrysobalanus icaco* (coco-plum), *Passiflora quadrangularis* (a passion-flower, the giant granadilla), *Prunus persica* var. *nectarina* (nectarine), and *Vitis vinifera* (California grape).

A. obliqua has also been recorded from many hosts belonging to the families Anacardiaceae, Annonaceae, Bignoniaceae, Fabaceae, Myrtaceae and Rosaceae. The favored food plants are the mombins, jobos, or hog plums of the genus *Spondias*, followed by the mango, the rose-apple, and the guava.

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