

Video Transcript for “Spinosad”

Because of the mild climate, Californians are able to grow and enjoy some of the best produce in the world. Actually, many countries depend on California-grown products. It is through the surveillance and vigilant effort of the California Department of Food and Agriculture that this abundant food supply is protected. One of the biggest threats to California agriculture is the exotic fruit fly. They can enter the country by land, sea or air. These invasive pests can wreak havoc on farms, orchards and backyard produce. Over 270 crops are at risk of being infested by various species of fruit flies. To eradicate exotic fruit fly infestations, CDFA uses an organically-formulated version of the pesticide called spinosad. What is spinosad?

Spinosad is used for organic crop production in California to control a variety of pests. It has a protein content that attracts invading fruit flies that feed upon it and die. Spinosad is safely used in residential areas, and has been used to effectively eradicate numerous fruit fly infestations throughout California.

The spinosad treatment will be done free of charge on properties that received a pink notification slip from the California Department of Food and Agriculture - alerting residents of an exotic fruit fly infestation in their area. The eradication process involves a minimum of six weekly applications until the infestation is eliminated. Residents will be asked to remove pets from the treatment area and keep them away for at least four hours after the spinosad application. Residents are not required to be present during the treatment. However, they are asked to:

- Unlock gates for the eradication crews;
- Remove toys, lawn furniture, and pet feeders away from trees; and
- Close doors and windows.

If special assistance is needed, or there’s a scheduling conflict, please call the pest hotline at 1-800-491-1899.

The spinosad bait is applied at six to ten feet above the ground and will not harm pollinators such as bees or other beneficial insects. A CDFA crew will apply several small squirts directly onto trees and shrubs. When the application is completed, the resident will be given the following precautionary information:

“Good morning. I’m with the California Department of Food and Agriculture . . .”

- Allow four hours for treated areas to dry prior to entry; and
- Wash backyard fruit prior to eating

Here are some additional measures taken to fight exotic fruit fly infestation:

- Do not transport fruits and vegetables from travels outside of California and avoid having them mailed to you;
- Avoid giving away backyard fruit until the infestation has been eradicated; and
- Always report any maggots or larvae found in backyard fruit.

Please visit our web site (www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant) to learn more about pests that threaten California agriculture.