

Biological Controls as Alternatives to The Urban Aerial Spraying of Malathion vs. The Mexican Fruit Fly

A Broadcast Reply to a KCBS-TV Editorial

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Audio Introduction: "Channel 2 has criticized the nighttime aerial spraying of malathion in Los Angeles. Here with a reply is Douglas E. Drenkow, Agricultural and Environmental Author."

We must consider biological controls for the prevention of Mexican fruit fly outbreaks.

Biological control typically uses predators and parasites to feed on pests. For example, "BT" bacteria are deadly to many caterpillars and fly maggots, but are relatively non-toxic to people, pets, and plants.

Biological controls are far less expensive in the long run than chemical controls, because the living creatures reproduce themselves. In Southern California avocado orchards, predators and parasites have been established for years and have eliminated countless insecticide applications.

Biological controls for an imported pest, such as the Mexican fruit fly, are often found in the pest's native land. A century ago, the citrus industry in Southern California was almost

wiped out by a pest accidentally imported from Australia; so a ladybug that feeds on the pest in Australia was intentionally imported: For five thousand dollars California's multi-billion dollar citrus industry was saved.

Predators of fruit flies and their maggots include many spiders, praying mantids, *las ninas de la tierra*, ants, lizards, birds, and possums. Agricultural officials can properly supervise biological controls.

An ounce of biological prevention is worth a pound of chemical cure.