

STOP THE INVADERS!

INSECTS CAN BE PESTS

Insects feed on many kinds of plants. Sometimes either the adult or larval stage will eat so much of the plant that the plant dies or is unable to produce fruit. When this happens the insect is considered a pest. Pest insects are particularly problematic when they feed on plants that people use for food. In Florida, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services works to protect our food supply from pests like the Mediterranean fruit fly and the rugose spiraling whitefly.



Mediterranean fruit fly is one of the world's most destructive pest insects of fruit. It attacks over 250 different fruits, vegetables, flowers and nuts! Larvae develop and feed on the pulp of the fruit, sometimes tunneling through it, making it rotten and inedible. It is a major pest of citrus, mango, pepper and tomato.



The **rugose spiraling whitefly** is present in Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties. It feeds on over 60 species of plants including coconut palms, avocado, gumbo limbo and Florida black olive. Whiteflies harm plants by removing water and nutrients. The sticky residue, honeydew, they excrete also promotes the growth of a fungus called sooty mold. The honeydew and mold decrease a plant's ability to produce nutrients.



HOW TO RECOGNIZE AN INSECT

- Three body parts: head, thorax and abdomen
- Six legs on the thorax
- One or two pairs of wings on the thorax
- An outer skeleton called an exoskeleton

Color Me! Use the photos below as a guide to color the fruit flies.

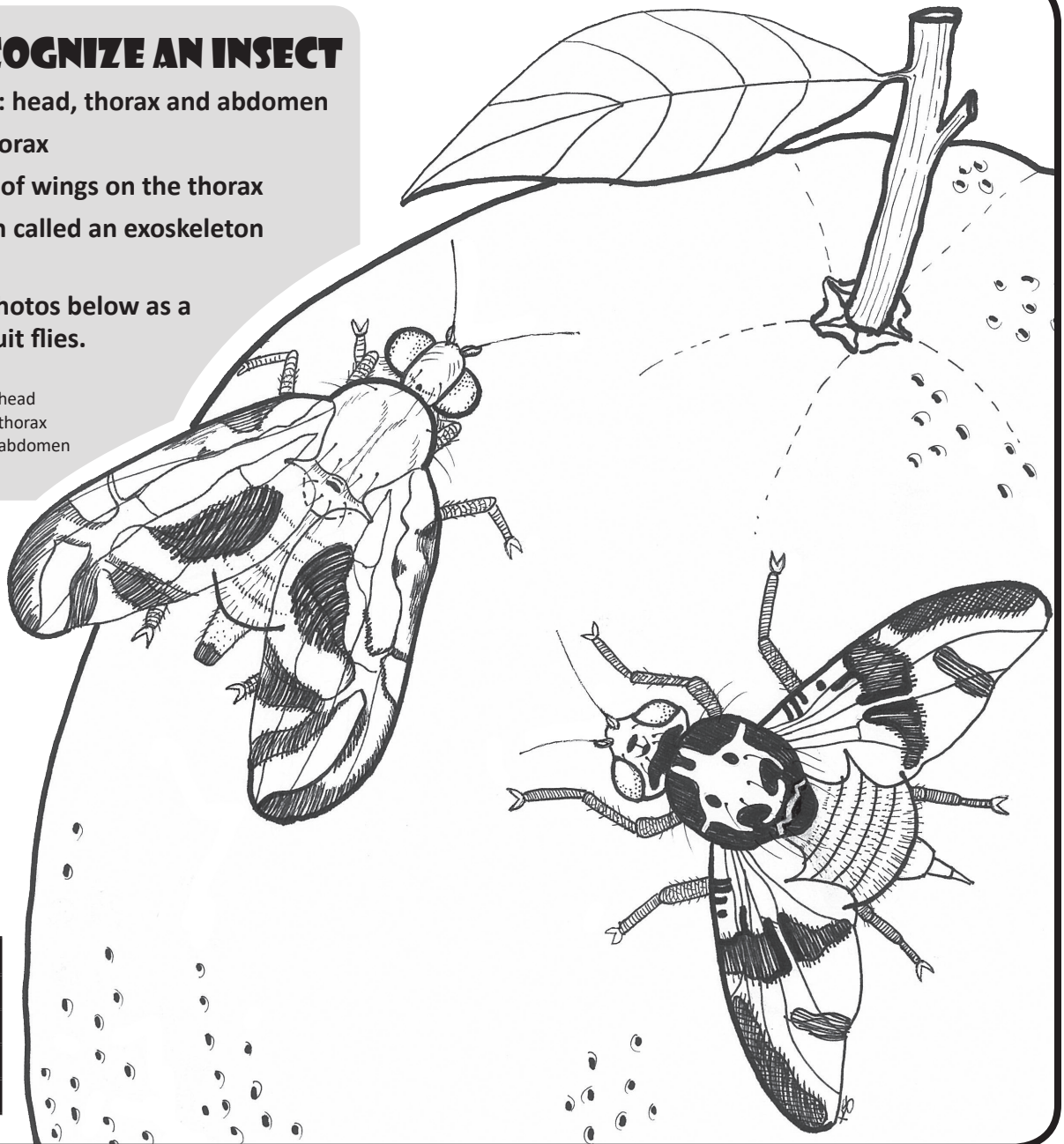


Mediterranean fruit fly



Caribbean fruit fly

COLOR/MIX	
brown	blue & orange
orange	red & yellow
black	yellow, red & blue
green	blue & yellow



TRUE OR FALSE?

- | | TRUE | FALSE |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. All insects have six legs | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. All insects have an exoskeleton | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. The legs and wings of an insect are on the abdomen | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. An insect has four body parts | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. Only adult insects are pests | ☐ | ☐ |



1-888-397-1517
FDACS.gov/PI

Answer Key: 1. T 2. T 3. F 4. F 5. F