

FLIGHTLESS FRUIT FLIES

Craig Rees – Minnesota Killie Keepers

A fantastic live food to keep on hand in the killie keeper's fishroom is flightless fruit flies. Nothing is better than live foods and this culture is easy to raise, maintain and keep going. Most of your fish will relish flies and will come to the surface to feed. The motion that the flies make on top of the water will attract the fish to feed on them.

Here is what you will need to put a culture together:

Disposable (AquaFina) water bottle

Plastic canvas (can be purchased at Michael's craft store)

Instant fruit fly media (can be purchased at Trans-Mississippi Biological Supply)

Few grains of baker's yeast (helps cut down on mold growth)

Filter floss or sponge caps (to cap the bottle, yet breathe)

I like to cut the neck of the bottle off to make the opening just a little larger.

You can do this with a hack saw or a razor blade knife. Be ever so careful if you use a knife. Keep your fingers behind the blade at all times, not in front of the blade when cutting.

- Add three tablespoons of instant media into the bottle.
- Now add 10-15 grains of yeast.
- Then add approximately equal amounts of water to the media ratio. It is important not to add too much water, as the flies will sink and drown. If the media is too dry, they can't lay their eggs. You can always add more water after the flies have been added to the culture if it is too dry, but you can't take water out if you have added too much. An eye dropper works well for wetting the media.
- Cut the plastic canvas so it will fit through the hole in the neck of the bottle. The canvas can be bent to form a U shape so the flies have more surfaces to climb up on.

Before adding flies to start your new culture, make sure that there are not water droplets on the sides of the bottle. Flies can drown when they climb into a drop of water. Wait till overnight or later in the day when the sides of the bottle are free from droplets.

Go ahead and put some flies into the bottle. Around 20 flies will be a good start for each culture. It takes usually 2-3 weeks to get enough flies to start feeding your fish. By that time they will have reproduced plenty. Always keep 6-8 cultures going and keep some at different weekly time stages so you will always have flies on hand to feed.

All you do to feed the flies is tip the bottle and tap like a salt & pepper shaker. Because the bottles are clear, you can see the flies as you are tapping them unto the water.

Keep your cultures out of direct sun light and store at 70 to 80 degrees. Flightless fruit flies are a very easy and worthwhile live food culture that will benefit the health of your fish.