Cucumber, bitter melon, Sequa, long squash, zucchini, pumpkin, Kabocha squash, watermelon, honeydew melon, cantaloupe and Korean melon are the most common cucurbitaceous host crops grown at Central Oahu, where the fruit fly suppression program has been launched. These crops can be grouped into two categories based on harvesting practices. Cucumber, bitter melon, Sequa, long squash and zucchini are harvested multiple times when the fruit are young and tender, whereas the pumpkins and other melons are harvested when they are mature. With few exceptions, small farmers mostly focus on crops, which are harvested young whereas the large farmers focus on crops, which are harvested at maturity.

Our observation suggests that melon fly prefer to attack young fruit compared to mature fruit. Because of the nature of the crop and the cultural practices employed for these crops, it is not practical to visit watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew and pumpkins melon fields to check fruit infestation when they are young. Farmers are plowing these fields soon after crop harvest to prevent fly breeding in the left over fruit in these crops. On the other hand, bitter melon, cucumber, Sequa, long squash and zucchini fruit are checked when they are young. This opens up the opportunity to remove and properly dispose infested fruit, to help suppress in-farm breeding of melon fly, especially in small farms.
A Look at the Oahu Melon Fly Situation
R.F.L. Mau

It is already March and the melon production season is beginning. As you can see in Figure 3, melon fly populations are at comparatively low levels at Kapolei and Ewa production areas. The graphs show average male numbers per trap. This might bode well for the upcoming season at those locations. During the fall the grower established castor oil plants in the central part of the Ewa growing area so that we would have bait treatment stations during the summer corn fallow.

The graphs also show that we began to employ the suppression tactics relatively late during the production season at Kapolei. We continued male annihilation trapping throughout the summer and are waiting to employ bait sprays on corn borders that were planted to provide melon fly roosting hosts.

GF-120 bait spray and male annihilation tactics were employed at new crop plantings at Kunia. We will continue to begin using those tactics as new fields are established. Stay tuned, we are all anxious to get on with suppression tactics at Kunia.