

Insider's Guide

Fruit Flies

7 Ways To Limit Fruit Flies Behind Your Bar



This guide is one component of the BetterBeer.com Insider's Guide Series.

Used by clients of Better Beer to help understand and troubleshoot their draught systems, these guides also provide tips and techniques on preventative maintenance.

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Do You Have Fruit Flies Behind Your Bar?

Most bars do. Fruit flies are one of the biggest nuisances in a bar. They bother guests sitting at the wood, they bother the bartenders behind the bar, and guests wonder how dirty the rest of the establishment is.

Today we'll answer the question – How do I get rid of fruit flies at my bar?

7 Ways To Limit Fruit Flies Behind Your Bar

1. Remove standing water.

- Drain and dry the ice well AND UNDER ANY COLD PLATES (used for soft drinks or clamp-on cider towers).
- Dry out the glass washer housing each night after you dismantle it.
- Remove all liquid from returned glasses to the bar after the dishwasher has been dismantled. You know – those glasses that the closing server brings to the bar after the table of campers finally leaves. PRO TIP – rinse those last few glasses with water to remove residual sugars and place them upside down in the glass washer housing.
- Pour a teapot full of hot water used for tea (from the coffee machine) down the draught spill trays and then dry thoroughly.
- Dry out the stand-alone glass rinser trays – this is why it is critical to install a shut-off valve on the water supply line so that your closing bartender doesn't get a shower when they accidentally hit the glass rinser assembly while drying the tray.

[Discover how beer yeast attracts fruit flies.](#)

2. Keep the faucet out of the glass when pouring pints.

When staff bury the faucet, it leaves all kinds of residual beer on the spigot. Fruit flies feed and lay eggs on this. Then your staff bury the faucet in the next pint.



Yup, that is a fruit fly buzzing around the dirty, sticky faucet.

3. Use Stainless Steel faucets, which slows growth.

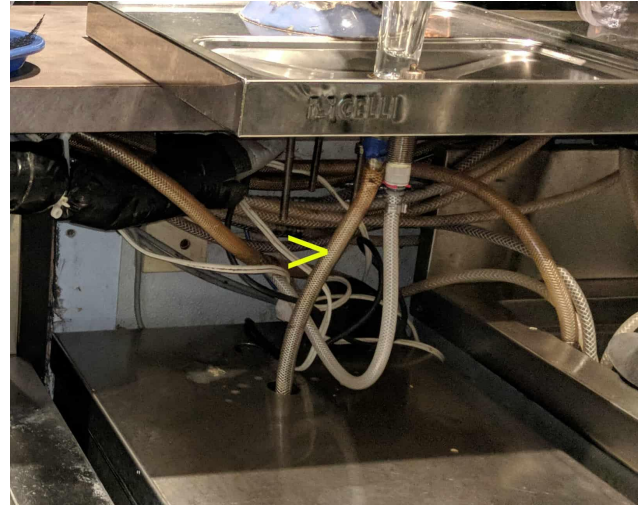
The faucet in the image is made of chrome-plated brass. The chrome wears off after a few months of use and exposes the brass. The brass eventually pits which creates an excellent place for growth to develop. Switch all your faucets to 100% 304-grade stainless steel, which slows growth development. Oh, and your staff still need to follow the proper pour point above. Stainless steel doesn't solve improper pour issues.



4. Replace the spill tray lines every 3 months.

This is the clear flexible plastic line that runs from your spill tray into a drain (or empty beer pitcher to track spillage). This line is typically 1/2 inch inside diameter (1/2" ID) vinyl hose. Your draught service tech should have this in their truck; have it replaced during a line cleaning so not to incur a service charge for a visit as they'll already be there.

The yellow arrow points to the spill tray drain line. Using braided vinyl (which they did) for drain lines is not recommended. Besides costing slightly more than un-braided, you can't see through it. Seeing build-up inside that line creates a sense of urgency to get it changed. If only draught service techs understood this, they'd sell more drain line and you'd have fewer fruit flies.



Too easy, no?

If you are feeling adventurous, you can usually buy it at Home Depot and do it yourself. This line should cost about \$1.50 per foot; you may need about 20 feet to replace all of the drain lines in your bar.

BAM! That's a quick, easy, cheap fix.

5. Pour a Quat (quaternary ammonium chloride) based solution down the drains every few days.

DO NOT USE BLEACH! Bleach is corrosive. Quat is not.

Where do you find such a magical cleaning solution? Right [here](#).

[What are the differences between bleach and quaternary ammonium chloride?](#)

6. Quarterly Cleaning Party.

The problem with most bars is that they are designed by people who have never worked in a bar. Or if they have, they are trying to plan workflow on a piece of paper. And, like most things in the restaurant business, what seems like a good idea theoretically, isn't always so.

Bar equipment isn't easy to move each night to clean behind it. Here's the solution:

- On a **Sunday night, once a quarter**, schedule a bar cleaning party.
- Ask all bar staff to attend AND those **staff who hope to work on the bar one day**. That last part is critical – the cocktailers and servers who want to be bartenders should jump at the chance to show initiative.
- You can order a ton of **pizza** for \$120
- Get some **free beer samples** from your local reps to sample with those who show up. Bar staff love free beer and pizza.
- **Pull out all of the equipment under the bar** that is not plumbed in. Sweep, mop, spray some quat-based cleaner around and let it all dry completely.
- This is also a great time to get rid of the branded beer glasses for brands you no longer carry (staff love to receive these too), **re-organize behind the bar**, and create a sense of ownership among the staff.

PRO TIP – don't schedule this on an inventory night, as there are too many people behind the bar to do either effectively.

7. Wash trays and tray mesh every week.

Listen, we know that the bar can get messy quickly. Everyone loves free-pouring flaming Sambuca over a row of shot glasses, but sometimes, even the best of the barkeeps get some spillage on the glass trays.

Assuming that you know you must be using [some kind of tray liners on your trays](#), it is a great habit to get into cleaning the trays and the mesh once a week.



The best way is to run the trays and the mesh through the dishwasher in the kitchen early in the morning before the dishwasher gets full of greasy pots and pans.

Replace the mesh every six months or so.

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Summary

Yes, the techniques above take some time and capital investment.

But think of the last time you sat at a bar and had to constantly swat fruit flies away.

Don't make your guests go through that too.

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Notes: