Pre-Announcement

This programme is about Drosophila, the common fruit fly and is linked to the Home Experiment of Unit 20, in which students catch and breed their own flies as part of a national survey of these insects.

Synopsis:

Associated with Unit 20 is a Home Experiment which involves breeding Drosophila (Fruit Flies) on different media. Students conducting this experiment expose the media to the air in jam jars for four to eight days thereby attracting the flies to lay eggs which subsequently develop into progeny flies. Students identify the species of fly by referring to illustrations provided in the broadcast notes to the programme, and are also encouraged to find the insect parasites of drosophila. The results from all students are collected together to form a national survey.

In this radio programme Dr. Peggy Varley, who devised the experiment, discusses the results obtained in earlier years, and by referring to illustrations in the notes, helps students in their identification of the flies. She discusses the parasites in particular because as a result of these Open University surveys, two new records have been added to the list of British Insects.