

LET'S STOP QUEENSLAND FRUIT FLY



August 2020

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Fruit fly on the move

As Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF) wake and mobilise after their winter down-time, action now to reduce the spread of the pest will limit impacts on future harvests.

Spring will see fruit fly continue to emerge from their winter slumber and as temperatures rise these flies will become more active and begin to mate, which has the potential to lead to increased populations in summer and peak harvest periods.

Awakening adult flies are now on the lookout for carbohydrates to increase their energy and protein for sexual maturity. Having used their reserves to survive winter, they must re-energise in order to mobilise. Flower nectar provides an ideal source of carbohydrates, while protein can be found in yeasts, fungi and bacteria growing on branches.

By taking action now, we have the opportunity to reduce the devastation that serious fruit fly outbreaks can have on our local horticultural industry.



QFF infested apple.

Action now in the home garden and orchard will protect upcoming harvests against the spread of Queensland Fruit Fly

Management plan

It is recommended that orchardists, commercial growers and home gardeners review and activate their fruit fly management plan and consider the below control measures and hygiene tasks:

- Remove and use or destroy late blooming fruit left on the tree
- Pick up and destroy all fallen fruit
- Keep an eye out for fruit on Crown land, creek banks, abandoned premises and roadsides and report unmanaged trees and plants to your local Council
- Remove fruiting plants and trees no longer needed
- Use fruit fly traps to assess if and when QFF is present
- Check fruit for signs of QFF – sting marks on the fruit surface, softening patches in the fruit flesh, eggs and or larvae in fruit
- Ensure access to baits and approved pesticides for QFF control if trap numbers increase significantly



Sting marks on this loquat indicate the presence of fruit fly. Photo by Andrew Jessup-Janren Consulting.

Seasonal activity

Seasonal factors impact the behaviour and movement of QFF. An adult fruit fly is highly mobile across the landscape with flight distances and durations becoming progressively shorter as the weather cools in autumn to winter and then lengthening again as the weather warms up after August and September.

During the winter months adult flies are no longer looking for partners to mate with or fruit to lay their eggs into. Over-wintering flies are focussed on surviving the cold by searching for protein, sugar, water and above all, shelter from predators, cold weather and wind. As temperatures increase flies revert to their reproductive mode of seeking protein, mates, fruit to lay eggs into and shelter from predators, the heat and wind.

It has been identified that while fruit fly trapping numbers were low in the Goulburn Murray Valley (GMV) region over winter, this was largely due to the fact that traps are not as effective in winter. Vigilance is required all year round to stop the spread of fruit fly.

While rain, as a source of water for survival, is not important for QFF at this time of year, rain in autumn and winter generally accompanied warmer than usual days which facilitates a higher level of fly survival. During the March – April fruit fly peak, rainfall in the region was consistently higher than average, promoting good fruit-set and maturation, creating ideal conditions – both fruit-wise and weather-wise – for fruit fly survival and proliferation.

If dusk temperatures hit higher than average temperatures, there may be a chance for adult QFF to mate and lay eggs in August which may require earlier than normal fruit inspection, trap deployment and baiting.



QFF are on the move after a winter slumber.

Good fruit set, whether it be in along roadsides, or in orchards and gardens, has the potential to cause large populations of new generation QFF in late spring and summer unless adequate control measures are undertaken including monitoring of population changes, checking fruit for sting marks, along with orchard and garden hygiene.

Free Fruit Tree Removal Program

If you have fruit trees you do not want or find difficult to manage, apply to have them removed free of charge through the Free Fruit Tree Removal Program. The removal of unmanaged fruit trees eliminates a potential breeding ground and helps protect the region against fruit fly. Collect an information pack from your local participating Council and complete and return the tree removal form to have your unwanted fruit trees removed free of charge.

The tree removal program has resulted in the removal of more than 90,000 unmanaged fruit trees and plants across the region since the commencement of the program in June 2017.



Tree removal works underway.

The program is provided free of charge to landholders and has seen the removal of unmanaged fruit trees and plants from orchards, private residences and public areas such as nature strips, roadsides, channel banks and reserves.

All tree removal works are carried out by fully insured professional contractors, in consultation with the landholder or responsible authority.

Spreading the 'No Flies On Us' message

The Goulburn Murray Valley Fruit Fly Area Wide Management Project continues to support growers, orchardists, home gardeners and community members to ensure effective control measures are implemented to reduce the impact of QFF. Through its Area Wide Management strategy the project has achieved an almost 60 per cent reduction in QFF trapped across the GMV region and a reduction of 83 per cent in QFF trapped in the Cobram urban area.

A continued emphasis remains on community education and awareness, with the project spreading the 'No Flies On Us' message through television, radio, newspaper, digital platforms and roadside advertising.

The project is a recognised leader in controlling the spread of QFF and takes a collaborative approach to the management and control of the pest. The project is funded by the Victorian Government's Managing Fruit Fly Regional Grants Program and includes the following partners: Campaspe Shire, Greater Shepparton City Council, Moira Shire, Strathbogie Shire, Berrigan Shire, Cobram and District Fruit Growers Association, Fruit Growers Victoria, Lions International and local service clubs.



GMV Regional Coordinator, Ross Abberfield spreading the 'No Flies On Us' message.

Fruit fly resistant options

Some fruit and fruiting vegetables are more resistant to QFF than others. It is a good idea for home gardeners to plant out seedlings or grafted tomato plants now in a warm spot or greenhouse for fruit before Christmas, as fruit flies are prevalent in January and February.

Cherry and Roma tomatoes are more resistant to fruit fly attack than larger, softer, more wrinkled tomato varieties. Fruit and vegetables that are more resistant to QFF include eggplants, cucumbers, zucchini, pumpkins, Finger limes, Tahitian limes, Eureka lemons, Lisbon lemons, chokos and monstera. Mandarins, grapefruit, lemonades and Meyer lemons are not resistant.



Zucchini is a more fruit fly resistant option.



Eggplant is a more fruit fly resistant option.



Pumpkin is a more fruit fly resistant option.

DID YOU KNOW?

Unmanaged loquat trees present a challenge across the Goulburn Murray Valley and are often associated with the first QFF hotspots coming out of winter.



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