

LET'S STOP QUEENSLAND FRUIT FLY



April 2021

Inside this edition:

- Free fruit tree removal program helping to stop the spread of Qfly in the Goulburn Murray Valley
- Autumn control critical in curbing numbers
- Extra vigilance required in hot spot areas
- Backyard fruit and essential garden tasks
- Flurry before winter lull
- Post-harvest hygiene and autumn focus

Free fruit tree removal program helping to stop the spread of Qfly in the Goulburn Murray Valley

The removal of unmanaged fruit trees eliminates a potential breeding ground and helps protect the region against Queensland fruit fly (Qfly).

Property owners and home gardeners with fruit trees they no longer want or find difficult to manage, can apply to have them removed free of charge through the Goulburn Murray Valley (GMV) Area Wide Management Program's free Fruit Tree Removal Program. The program has allowed for the successful removal of potential breeding grounds across the region, making it harder for fruit fly to get a foot hold and spread.

Collect an information pack from your local participating Council and complete and return the tree removal form to have your unwanted fruit tree removed.



Autumn control critical in curbing numbers

More Qfly on the landscape means any fruit that is around will be infested. Seemingly insignificant fruit such as the odd roadside feral peach, or a bank of prickly pears, will be heavily attacked and become the source of large new populations.

It is essential to clean up and destroy as many fruit fly host fruit as possible. Community members are asked to be on the lookout for feral fruiting plants, untended fruit in abandoned orchards, vacant ground, creek banks, roadsides and rental properties, as well as front, side and back yards. Even small numbers of fruiting plants will be targeted by Qfly and must be controlled.



Extra vigilance required in hot spot areas

Cobram urban and Cobram rural are showing low Qfly numbers now, when in previous years they registered higher numbers. It is likely that the sterile insect technique pilot trial, now in its second year in Cobram, has had a significant beneficial impact. Other locations are proving much more difficult to reduce Qfly. These are referred to as 'hot spots' and have been identified and targeted through the region's Area-Wide Management strategy.

Hot spot areas have been identified through the GMV Qfly trapping grid in the below locations:

- Merrigum
- Katamatite
- Numurkah
- Ardmona
- Nagambie
- Katunga
- Euroa

Extra vigilance is required in these areas through regular monitoring and inspection of fruit. Numbers of Qfly trapped in urban areas of the GMV are on their way down but are increasing in peri-urban and rural areas. The likely cause of this cross-over is that urban fruit are nearly finished (have been harvested or eaten by birds) and large volumes of commercial or larger-scale crops are now ripe in peri-urban and rural areas, attracting Qfly from urban areas, through peri-urban locations and into commercial crops.

Backyard fruit and essential garden tasks

Unmanaged fruit must be controlled through autumn, as it is the root cause of fruit fly population explosions in the upcoming spring. Essential autumn tasks for home gardeners include:

- Remove fruit and cook, eat, process;
- Remove and destroy unwanted fruit (solarise, heat, freeze, burn, drown) – don't compost;
- Net trees, single tree, branch or individual trusses or fruit
- Monitor and check traps regularly;
- Check ripe or ripening fruit for sting marks and/or larval infestations;
- Clean up fallen and unwanted fruit.



Flurry before winter lull

Qfly are desperate to find fruit to lay the last of their season's eggs into before they switch to winter survival mode (seeking protein, sugar and shelter). Young Qfly reared on these fruit will emerge as adults in late April/ early May and look for food and shelter to survive winter. If all susceptible fruit could be removed from the landscape at this time, there would be little chance of Qfly surviving the winter in great numbers.

More Qfly on the landscape means any fruit that is around will be infested. Seemingly insignificant fruit such as the odd roadside feral peach, or a bank of prickly pears, will be heavily attacked and become the source of large new populations.

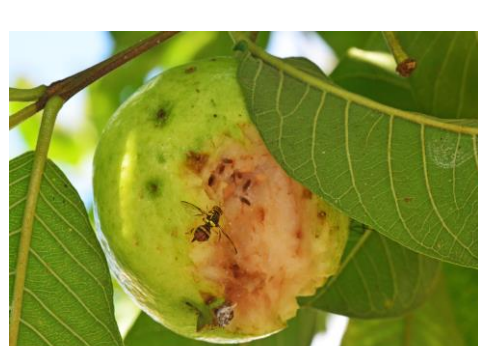
It is essential to clean up and destroy as many fruit fly host fruit as possible. Community members and growers are asked to be on the lookout for feral fruiting plants, untended fruit in abandoned orchards, vacant ground, creek banks, roadsides and rental properties, as well as front, side and back yards. Even small numbers of fruiting plants will be targeted by Qfly.

Post-harvest hygiene and autumn focus

The shortage of labour to pick fruit this season has caused many growers to leave excess fruit on their trees or the ground. Although growers are not responsible for this labour shortage, unmanaged fruit is a potential food source and breeding habitat for Qfly.

Post-harvest hygiene is essential to suppress current populations and prevent increased fruit fly pressure occurring and impacting next season's harvest. Post-harvest hygiene options include:

- Slash or mulch;
- Rake out from under trees and slash or mulch;
- Cover with impermeable sheeting and fumigate with chemical approved for this purpose;
- Deep bury – cover must be more than 30cm deep and be packed down (clay soils are generally not suitable due to deep cracking if they dry out);
- Apply approved sprays as per your advice from your agronomist;
- Feed to animals, run stock to clean up orchard floor;
- Burn (use of accelerant may need approval).



DID YOU KNOW?

Annual trends indicate the autumn months and ideal conditions will see Qfly migrate from home gardens, through peri-urban orchards and gardens into outlying rural commercial orchards and gardens, presenting a problem for commercial growers at this time of year.



Station Street, Cobram Vic 3644
 PO Box 578, Cobram Vic 3643
 t: (03) 5871 9222 f: (03) 5872 1567
 e: gmfruitfly@moira.vic.gov.au

