

LET'S STOP QUEENSLAND FRUIT FLY



August 2021

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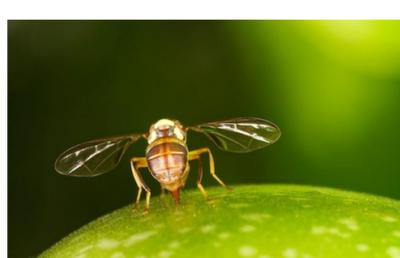
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Heat sinks provide a refuge for fruit fly

Urban areas can act as heat sinks during the winter and provide a refuge for fruit fly. Fruit flies are able to survive the winter in these areas in large numbers if not managed and will be the cause of next season's fruit fly problems in home gardens, peri-urban properties and then commercial orchards.

It is important that home gardeners and all property owners remove unpicked ripe or ripening fruit during August and September. Picking this fruit will reduce the number of fruit fly produced through egg-laying by Queensland fruit fly (Qfly) that survive winter.

There are locations within the region where, at this time of year, Qfly will survive easily and may move around more freely and infest fruit. These areas are typically concentrated in urban locations within townships because of the higher overall temperatures present within built up areas where heat from the sun is passively absorbed by things such as roads and walls and then released in the evening. Heat is actively generated by household heating where homes are concentrated in urban areas.



Weather favourable for fruit fly

The region's August weather outlook indicates Qfly that survive winter will be able to emerge from their winter refuges in greater numbers than normal.

Forecasts from the Bureau of Meteorology predict a 70-75% chance of above average rainfall, a 50-60% chance of higher than average maximum temperatures and a 75-80% chance of above average minimum temperatures. This outlook provides ideal conditions for flies that were able to find refuge over winter and survive the cold period.

A regional snapshot

- Fruit fly trapping rates dropped to low levels with cold weather from the end of May, through June and into July – indicating that it's too cold for fruit fly to be attracted to the traps.
- High trapping rates during April and May suggest that an overwintering population of adults, untrappable over winter due to cold weather, may be high.
- Weather outlooks for August favour the survival of overwintering fruit fly across the region.
- The Goulburn Murray Valley (GMV) fruit fly trapping grid has indicated the presence and location of a number of winter hot spots to target under the Area Wide Management Program from August to October.
- Weather forecasts for August suggest that significant fruit fly population expansion may occur in the following spring and summer and this will be facilitated by the large numbers of fruit fly that were present in the previous autumn of 2021.
- The GMV fruit fly trapping grid is an essential tool for identifying hot spots, timing of Qfly management activities and evaluating the efficacy of Area Wide Management Programs including Sterile Insect Technique (SIT).



Essential monitoring and control tasks

- Place traps to monitor for Qfly
- Check early or late-hanging fruit for fruit fly sting marks
- Cover your crop with a net to keep fruit fly out
- Purchase traps/baits/nets & approved pesticides if required
- Clear away and destroy unwanted fruit
- Consider complete removal of unwanted fruiting plants, trees and vines
- Work with neighbours in controlling fruit fly
- Keep a close watch-out for feral fruiting plants and inform Council of their presence and location.



Advice for rural home owners and property owners

Buildings such as heated houses and sheds ensure that there are spots within these gardens that favour Qfly survival over the winter. The mix of fruiting crops in and near these locations encourage population build up in the spring from flies that have overwintered on-site as well as flies moving in from urban spots which facilitates the spread of fruit fly into more outlying commercial orchards in late summer/ early autumn.

The most likely spot for fruit fly to overwinter is inside the protective canopy of evergreen plants near warmth. Common overwintering sites are citrus, avocados, loquats near heated houses and sheds. Hanging fruit fly traps in them throughout the year, and especially in the winter, is very useful in monitoring Qfly.

Information for growers and commercial producers

While fruit fly is generally not a problem to commercial orchardists in the late winter and spring, it is important to ensure you have supplies of Qfly monitoring and control material for immediate use.

Fruit fly traps are effective in determining whether or not Qfly is present in your orchard or near the house. It is recommended that traps are deployed all year round. You should move traps out of deciduous orchards in the winter to areas where it is warmer and where there are evergreen plants as this is where fruit fly will overwinter. Female-biased traps should be placed in evergreen plants (e.g. lemon tree) situated near the house, packing shed or other relatively warm position.



Fruit fly baits are the best method for controlling fruit flies before populations get too big to handle through baiting alone. Once fruit flies are found in traps, commence bait applications as per the label, this is particularly important if you find infested fruit in or near your crop.

If fruit fly numbers increase and get out of hand you may need to use pesticide cover sprays. Staff from your produce store will assist in making the best decisions on pesticide use. Only pesticides with APVMA approvals should be used.

DID YOU KNOW?

Fruit fly will not fly at temperatures below about 15°C and are likely to be non-responsive to the sex lures in traps because, at this time of year both sexes are interested only in food so they can survive winter.



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