

LET'S STOP QUEENSLAND FRUIT FLY



January 2021

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New season populations

Queensland fruit fly (Qfly) numbers increased in urban areas throughout the region in December 2020, representing the start of the new season's fruit fly population. If not controlled, these populations will explode to large numbers causing significant damage to fruit across the Goulburn Murray Valley (GMV) from February to April 2021. Higher levels of rainfall, along with increased humidity and fruit set, as a result of the La Niña weather pattern occurring across much of South Eastern Australia, provides favourable conditions for further population expansion.

Area-wide management activities carried out by the GMV Fruit Fly Area Wide Management Project are having a positive impact, however continued vigilance is required to stop the spread.

Essential strategies for home gardeners with a fruit tree or vegetable patch include:

- monitoring through trapping
- regular inspection of fruit
- use of baits and netting
- picking fruit early or as it ripens



Fruit fly hot spots

The following urban areas have been identified through trapping data as Qfly hot spots:

- Euroa
- Mooroopna
- Numurkah
- Kyabram
- Nagambie
- Shepparton

These sites cover a large part of the GMV region and if not managed efficiently, hot spots will spread from these sites into the rest of the region immediately surrounding them. New generations will emerge from these flies and spread in a ripple effect further out into commercial crops nearby in autumn – when most commercial crops in the region ripen.

Advice for growers

It is unlikely that commercial growers, outside of urban locations, will have problems with Qfly right now as numbers in rural traps are very low. However, if you live within approximately 1km of the hot spot towns mentioned above, it is recommended growers remove all unwanted fruiting material and stock up on traps, baits and pesticides. It is essential to ensure any pesticides in storage are within their use-by dates and are still approved for use in your state and on your fruit type.

Don't forget to check for Qfly in your **HOUSE GARDEN** because fruit fly may have survived the winter by finding refuge in evergreen plants in warm spots near the house or packing/machinery shed and have continued their life cycle, creating new generations.



January weather outlook

Captures Qfly trap capture rates are expected to increase into January 2021 as they follow the same annual pattern since trapping commenced in the GMV in 2012. If night time maximum temperatures and rainfall are higher due to the effect of La Niña, increased soil moisture and humidity will increase micro bacterial growth, creating another protein food source for female Qfly's. If not managed, this will contribute to increased fruit fly numbers.

Data and weather outlook received from the Bureau of Meteorology website weather outlook for January 2021 (accessed 23 December 2020) indicates:

Rainfall

There is a 55-65% chance that January rainfall will be higher than the monthly average (10 to 25mm) which will see Qfly survival favoured by more rain than usual.

Temperature (maximum)

There is a 60-65% chance that daily maximum temperatures in January will be higher than the monthly average (30-33°C), with this scenario not limiting to Qfly survival.

Temperature (minimum)

There is a 75% to over 80% chance that daily minimum temperatures in January will be higher than average (12-15°C) for January, creating a scenario that favours Qfly survival.

Temperature outlooks for January 2021 suggest that conditions will be ideal for Qfly survival, egg-laying and larval development in fruit, with fruit set improved due to favourable La Niña based conditions.

Free Tree Removal Program open



The removal of unmanaged fruit trees eliminates a potential breeding ground and helps protect the region against fruit fly. Property owners with fruit trees they no longer want or find difficult to manage, can apply to have them removed free of charge through the Free Fruit Tree Removal Program.

The program 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. The removal of these host plants is highly effective in the control of fruit fly.

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

DID YOU KNOW?

Increased micro bacterial growth caused by the effects of the La Nina weather event creates another protein food source for female Qflys.



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