

# LET'S STOP QUEENSLAND FRUIT FLY



## December 2021

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### La Nina and fruit fly

Weather outlooks are reporting that eastern and south-eastern Australia has entered a La Nina event – as we had in mid-2019 to early 2020. This generally means more rain, cooler maximum temperatures and warmer minimum temperatures. This also means more damaged fruit, bacteria, fungi and yeasts which leads to more Queensland fruit fly (Qfly).

If the La Nina event extends throughout summer and autumn 2021/2022 the Qfly risk will be heightened due to the elongated benign weather conditions of spring 2021. Fruit fly numbers will soar in December if action isn't taken to reduce the impact of fruit fly in home gardens.

Qfly build-up commences when numbers in urban areas start to decline and fruit starts to ripen in rural locations – generally around February.



### Extra vigilance required

As a result of this year's cooler and wetter spring there is an increased Qfly risk for summer and the following autumn. This is due to recent conditions allowing adult Qfly that survived the winter to survive longer than usual into the spring. Qfly will be less affected by lack of moisture. These conditions allow more bacteria, fungi and yeasts to grow in the environment – and these are adult Qfly food sources.

This means that Qfly adults have easy access to water and food, more time to find fruit and more types of fruit to infest. Conditions will make fruit softer and maybe develop skin cracks (e.g. as in rain-affected cherries) which allows easier stinging of fruit by Qfly.

Commercial growers, landowners with small mixed orchards and home gardeners with fruit and fruiting vegetables must be on the lookout for Qfly and be active in controlling conditions for their survival and spread.

### Check fruit as it ripens

Particular attention should be paid to fruit as it is ripening to allow for early identification of fruit fly. It is important to pick up or harvest and cook or destroy unwanted and un-harvested fruit, as produce that is left on the tree or plant remains a target. Fruit requiring particular attention that may be ripe or ripening in December includes:

- loquats
- early tomatoes
- blackberries
- apricots
- early chillies
- mulberries
- oranges
- early capsicums
- cherries
- cumquats



### Fruit fly hot spots

Even though no areas have reached significant Qfly numbers – to the extent that they are in outbreak proportions – the following locations have registered concerning trap capture rates.

- Euroa
- Mooroopna
- Shepparton

It is recommended that growers and property owners who reside or farm near these towns have fruit fly traps out and have a fall-back position if numbers captured in traps increase (e.g. baiting, netting or tree removal).

### Take action and control the spread

#### Be on the lookout:

- Look for fruiting plants in gardens and yards, on roadsides, creek banks, and abandoned orchards.
- Set up fruit fly traps and monitor them regularly (every week at least) for the presence and build-up of Qfly.

#### Control fruit fly survival and spread

- Remove unwanted fruiting plants or their fruit or notify the GMV Regional Fruit Fly Office or Council of their presence if you do not have access.
- Commercial growers or co-ordinated groups of neighbouring households: Use weekly baiting or staged community baiting to keep fruit flies under control.
- Home gardeners: Use tree, branch or fruit netting products to keep Qfly away from your fruit as it ripens.
- Everyone: Pick up or harvest and cook or destroy unwanted windfalls and un-harvested fruit.



### Free fruit tree removal program

The removal of unmanaged fruit trees eliminates a potential breeding ground and helps protect the region against 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 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 a tree removal form to have your unwanted fruit tree removed.



### DID YOU KNOW?

The Goulburn Murray Valley Regional Fruit Fly project monitors fruit fly populations through its regional trapping grids which monitors and records Qfly activity across the region.



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

