

FRUIT FLY

GMV program targets exotic pest fruit flies

Fruit fly is a global problem that has serious implications for production and market access of Australia's multi-billion-dollar fruit and vegetable industry. Of primary concern to Australia is the native Queensland fruit fly [QFly] (*Bactrocera tryoni*) and the exotic Mediterranean fruit fly [Medfly] (*Ceratitis capitata*).

Queensland fruit fly infests most fruit and fruiting vegetables grown in Victoria and has become established in many parts of the state, including the Goulburn Murray Valley (GMV).

Goulburn Murray Valley Fruit Fly Area Wide Management Program coordinator **Ross Abberfield** said the innovative program he leads creates awareness, education and engagement in the community, industry and government to educate and engage everyone to take responsibility for reducing the impact of this pest.

"Key to controlling the spread of fruit fly is the program's capabilities to provide real-time data and identify urban and regional 'hot spots' from the programs' multiple regional trapping grids," Mr Abberfield said.

"Information disseminated through the program engages the wider community to install and monitor their own traps, regularly check their fruit and vegetables for sting marks, install netting, baits and apply approved pesticides if required, to help control and manage fruit fly," he said.

Increasing community awareness of national fruit fly issues is one of the National Fruit Fly Council's (NFFC) priorities this year.



Oriental fruit fly. Photo – Plant Health Australia.



Mediterranean fruit fly. Photo – Plant Health Australia.

"By engaging with local governments, community groups, and home gardeners in regional production areas, they understand how they can help reduce pressure on horticulture industries, including through area-wide management," said NFFC manager **Stuart Burgess**.

Victoria's Goulburn Murray Valley Fruit Fly Area Wide Management Program offers advice and support in relation to the pruning of fruit trees to manageable heights, early picking of fruit and disposing of fallen and unwanted fruit correctly.

The program helps with the removal of unwanted and unmanaged private and public fruit trees, host crops, feral and rogue roadside host plants in a bid to make it harder for fruit fly to wreak havoc.

GMV Fruit Fly Area Wide Management Program chair **Tony Siciliano** said the multi-award-winning program is now expanding upon its Qfly focus, also targeting exotic pest fruit flies.

"The program uses its 3000 community volunteers and extensive communications platform to educate and engage the broader GMV community in identifying, detecting and reporting exotic pest fruit fly species that would seriously impact horticultural production in the region," Mr Siciliano said.

The program's research consultant, **Andrew Jessup** (Janren Consulting) said there was a range of exotic pest fruit flies to be aware of.

"Foremost is the Mediterranean fruit fly [Medfly] (*Ceratitis capitata*). This pest attacks most fruit and fruiting vegetables but is not present in Victoria however, it has established populations in several regions of Western Australia and there are periodic outbreaks in South Australia each year recently, which means that Victoria is at high risk," Mr Jessup said.