



January 2025

Inside this Edition

- Summary
- Land Use Type
- GMV Fruit Fly Hot Spots
- Weather Forecast
- Unmanaged Feral Fruit Tree Removal - Public Land
- Unmanaged Fruit Tree Removal - Residential Land
- Monitoring Traps
- Monitoring Fruit
- Physical Exclusion
- Baiting
- Pesticides
- Control with Traps and Bait Stations
- Area Wide Management

Summary

Qfly populations are continuing to build up in the GMV during the first half of January 2025. Since early September 2024, temperatures are above those in the previous three years heralding a late but significant Qfly population build up, unless Area Wide Management strategies are implemented to reduce the impact of Qfly (go to www.fruitflycontrol.com.au for more information).

Now is the time to ensure all unwanted fruiting plants, or their fruit, are removed from home gardens, front yards, around sheds, along creek banks, nature strips, abandoned or untended fruiting plants and Government land. Targeted active management by the community, industry and government is necessary to avoid major population build up in late summer and autumn 2025.

Land use type

Peri-urban trap sites were trending higher than urban up until the end of November but a rapid increase in Qfly numbers in urban traps during early December leave the two land use types at equal levels of severity. Urban and peri-urban sites trend higher than rural areas at this time of the season. This is due to urban and peri-urban areas having a range of fruiting host plants, warmth and irrigation as well as better refuge than rural areas where crops generally ripen in late summer and autumn in the GMV.

Individual rural sites that do have high Qfly numbers at this time are likely to have persistent Qfly populations surviving in untended home gardens and untended non-commercial fruit trees in the orchard.

GMV Fruit Fly Hot Spots - as of 9 January 2025

Kyabram	Cobram	Invergordon
Merrigum	Shepparton	Mooroopna
Orrvale	Shepparton East	Lemnos
Katunga	Kialla East	Lancaster

Weather Forecast

The long-range forecast for January to March shows:

- warmer than average days and nights are likely to very likely across most of Australia
- warmer than average nights are very likely across almost all of Australia with an increased chance of unusually high overnight temperatures nationwide

Weather model distributions predicting weather patterns from January to March 2025 are split between wetter than average and neutral rainfall but higher than average temperatures are very likely for this period.

- Oceans have warmed to Australia's north, offering a better moisture source.
- Weather systems capable of getting a connection to this moisture could cause conditions to be wetter.
- A possible La Niña formation has backed off again this month.
- Models are split between a wetter or neutral next 3 months.

Unmanaged Feral Fruit Tree Removal - Public Land

Fruit seedlings can be introduced into public areas through flooding, weather events, fauna, human movement and road, rail and water transportation. If not managed or eradicated, seedlings can grow into fruiting plants, establishing a breeding habitat for fruit fly.

The GMV fruit fly program has generated awareness, education and engagement in the community, industry and government consistently since 2017. During this period, it has educated the GMV community to understand that the removal of unmanaged fruit trees will permanently help stop the spread of Qfly in the region. The GMV community response has been to request the coordinator to remove unwanted fruit trees from backyard gardens, unmanaged orchards and to report feral tree locations where they are growing on public lands. To date, the GMV program has removed 121,482 unmanaged fruit trees within the GMV region, 15,282 of these unmanaged fruit trees have been removed/eradicated since August 2023. Remember, every unmanaged fruit tree that is removed means that there is reduced breeding habitat for fruit fly to flourish. If fruit fly awareness, education and engagement continues in the community, industry and government, and we are able to protect our fruit industry, the GMV region will continue to be 'Australia's Food Bowl'.

If you see any unmanaged feral fruit trees on public land please note the location and report them to the program coordinator by phoning 03 58325202 or emailing fruitflycontrol@shepparton.vic.gov.au

Unmanaged Fruit Tree Removal - Residential Land

The GMV Unmanaged Fruit Tree Removal program is set to terminate soon. All applications need to be completed and acquitted by 31 March 2025. If you want any unmanaged fruit trees removed, free of charge, from residential properties in Greater Shepparton City or Moira, Campaspe and Strathbogie Shires, ensure your applications are submitted asap to enable all works to be completed by 31 March 2025. Application forms are available from your local government offices or you can contact the program by phoning 03 58325202 or emailing fruitflycontrol@shepparton.vic.gov.au

Monitoring Traps

How do you know if you have a new lot of pest fruit flies in or near to your garden or orchard? By having some monitoring traps on your property. These typically catch male fruit flies only and will tell you if there are fruit flies around and when they are starting to build up in numbers. When that occurs, or preferably, just before, it's time to make a decision on what needs to be done to keep your property and those nearby fruit fly free. Your Fruit Fly Coordinator or produce store rep or what you've learned from workshops, including the internet and social media will help guide you.

Monitoring Fruit

Checking your fruit, visually, for the presence of fruit fly sting marks, eggs and larvae should go hand-in-hand with monitoring your traps. Most traps catch male fruit flies only, but it is the female which causes fruit quality problems. Checking fruit for the presence of fruit fly damage lets you know if female fruit flies are present. If you find such damage that means that your crop is now at high risk of infestation. You need to carry out fruit fly control activities urgently.

Physical Exclusion

One of the best methods for fruit fly control in home gardens is physical exclusion or "exclusion netting". There are many types and brands of commercial netting available, but you can also make your own using muslin, voile, flyscreen, etc. Paper bags are also very effective. Cloth or paper bags can cover individual fruits or bunches of fruit, and netting can cover branches or whole trees. It depends on the size of the host plant and whether or not it needs to be pollinated as the netting keeps out bees and other pollinators. If the crop needs to be pollinated, you can apply the netting after fruit set. Take care that enclosing the plant in netting does not restrict air movement too much as moulds and mealy bug may build up and cause crop damage. Another issue to be aware of is that netting should not rest on the fruit surface as Qfly will just land on the netting and lay its eggs through the mesh and into the fruit.

Baiting

Baiting is one of the best pest fruit fly control strategies, apart from fruit fly host plant removal, that is currently approved for fruit flies in a number of crops and home garden scenarios. There are several types and brands with official approval for usage. See your Fruit Fly Coordinator or your local produce store rep for advice on what's available. Remember, though, that thorough weekly baiting, while it's warm enough for fruit fly to fly around (temperatures, during the day, are above 13°C), is essential. Re-apply bait if it rains and don't miss any weeks. You can bait evergreen non-crop plants, especially those around the fence-line of your yard or the perimeter of your orchard, to attract fruit flies as they cross the border into your place.

Pesticides

There are some pesticides approved for use against pest fruit flies. It is up to you to ensure that, if you do use a pesticide, it is registered for use against the pest fruit fly you are targeting, in the State you are applying it and for the crop you are trying to protect. Contact the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)

on <https://portal.apvma.gov.au/pubcris> or <https://portal.apvma.gov.au/permits> or by phone or e-mail, or your produce store rep, to ensure all is OK.

Control with Traps and Bait Stations

There has been some success with using large numbers of traps (fruit fly lures and toxicants are enclosed inside a container with entry holes and hung in trees) and pads (lures and toxicants without the container) as a form of fruit fly control. Here, you can use both male- and female-targeting traps or pads, but you need quite a few per hectare – 50 to 100. This system can be quite effective, in conjunction with baiting programs, in orchards but needs to be on an area-wide scale for urban areas.

Area Wide Management

For more information of Fruit Fly Area Wide Management visit www.fruitflycontrol.com.au or scan the QR code. If further assistance is required in managing fruit fly, contact the Goulburn Murray Valley Fruit Fly Office by phoning 03 58325202 or emailing fruitflycontrol@shepparton.vic.gov.au



Information Packs Available From
Customer Service:

Campaspe Shire Council
Greater Shepparton City Council
Moirra Shire
Strathbogie Shire Council
Berrigan Shire Council

GMV REGIONAL FRUIT FLY PROGRAM



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