



Media Release

Students help spread the fruit fly message in Tongala

The 'Bye Bye Fruit Fly' community event was an opportunity to spread the word on effective fruit fly control methods.

More than 250 students from St Patrick's Primary School and Tongala Primary School turned out to the schools session on Tuesday 17 October at the Tongala Shire Hall to hear first-hand about fruit fly management. The session was also a chance to decorate their very own fruit fly trap, which they were encouraged to take home and place in their garden.

The Tongala Lions Club's 'Bye Bye Fruit Fly' event was supported by the Goulburn Murray Valley Regional Fruit Fly Action Group, Campaspe Shire Council and Fruit Growers Victoria.

Goulburn Murray Valley Regional Fruit Fly Coordinator Ross Abberfield spoke to students about simple prevention measures that should be implemented by anyone with a fruit tree in their garden.

"We had a captive audience, so it was great to be able to educate the youngest members of our community on the simple steps they can take with their parents to help reduce the spread of fruit fly in the region.

"Students were able to decorate their own fruit fly trap and were responsive to the facts about fruit fly that we shared on the day," Mr Abberfield said.

A generous donation of apples by grower Jeff Thomson allowed children to enjoy some delicious local produce and Fruit Growers Victoria had the Packy Pear mascot on hand in support of the fruit fly awareness message.

The community session held Tuesday evening was well attended, with the focus on community awareness continuing.

Free fruit fly traps were distributed at the community session through Campaspe Shire.

Those in attendance were reminded that property owners with unwanted fruit trees in residential yards have until the end of October to apply to have them removed at no cost through the Urban Fruit Tree Removal Program.

The program is part of a regional approach to combating the spread of Queensland Fruit Fly and has been extended to accommodate the high number of property owners opting to remove unwanted fruit trees. The program is being implemented across Campaspe, Greater Shepparton, Moira and Strathbogie Shires.

Applications to have fruit trees removed through the program are available from participating Councils.

“The Queensland fruit fly is generally relatively dormant during winter when the weather is too cold for them to be active, however start to become more active in Spring, so now is the time to take action,” Mr Abberfield said.

The Tongala ‘Bye Bye Fruit Fly’ program will be put to the Lions Convention in October to be adopted by Lions Clubs in NSW and Victorian Clubs and if approved and rolled out by other Clubs will have a positive effect on raising community awareness about fruit fly management.

Like the Goulburn Murray Valley Regional Fruit Fly Action Group on Facebook to keep abreast of important QFF information.

-END-