



Media Release

Home gardeners to play a key role in combating rising numbers of Queensland Fruit Fly

Spring action required

Home gardeners with fruit trees are being urged to spring into action and do their bit to reduce the spread of Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF).

QFF becomes active in Spring after being relatively dormant during the colder weather, with home gardeners reminded that now is the time to take action.

Goulburn Murray Valley Regional Fruit Fly Coordinator Ross Abberfield said it was important that anyone with a fruit tree growing in their garden or on their property was aware of the necessary preventative steps and the critical role these steps play in reducing the spread of QFF.

"It is essential that people take a range of measures such as setting traps and using netting to provide a physical barrier to stop female QFF from reaching fruit and laying its eggs. In addition to this, other key preventative actions include baiting or spraying if appropriate.

"Unfortunately no one action will prevent the spread of QFF. Gardeners and property owners need to understand the importance of good garden hygiene, which means picking fruit as it ripens rather than letting it sit and rot, and destroying rotten or unwanted fruit," Mr Abberfield said.

Unwanted host fruit can be destroyed by placing it in the freezer or microwave to kill maggots. Fruit can also be destroyed by placing it in a sealed plastic bag and leaving it in the sun for 5-7 days before throwing it out.

Other key management actions include the removal of unwanted fruit trees, early harvest of fruit and undertaking pruning to allow fruit to be easily picked and the easy application of netting, sprays or baits.

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, which has been extended for an additional month due to high demand.

The program, is an initiative of the Goulburn Murray Valley Regional Fruit Fly Action Group and is available in Campaspe, Greater Shepparton, Moira and Strathbogie Shires.

The program is one of several actions from the Goulburn Murray Valley Fruit Fly Action Plan to be implemented by the Group, which consists of members from local and state government, horticultural producers and community members.

"QFF is a serious risk to the region's multi-billion dollar horticulture industry, backyard orchards and vegetable gardens, with an integrated approach imperative in protecting the region.

“QFF populations typically increase in the warmer weather so now is the time to be most effective in managing rising numbers,” Mr Abberfield said.

For more information about the management of QFF or the Urban Fruit Tree Removal Program contact the customer service centres of participating Councils.

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

-END-