

QUEENSLAND FRUIT FLY COMMUNITY UPDATE

The importance of post harvest hygiene

Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF) hygiene strategies focus on

the collection and destruction of susceptible fruit. Fruit left on trees or vines after harvest and fruit on the ground should be harvested and picked up and destroyed before eggs and larvae that may be in them can mature to the pupa stage. QFF larvae leave these fruit and pupate in the ground as fruit rots away. If this is allowed to happen QFF will be almost impossible to manage as pesticides approved for ground application against pupae are difficult to apply and not always 100 per cent effective. There is no pesticide approved for ground application in home gardens.

Fruit left on trees or the ground after harvest is especially susceptible.

Following harvest of most fruit, local QFF populations remain in orchards for a week or two before moving on to another site with ripe or ripening fruit. These QFF are desperate to lay eggs as most host fruit has been removed during harvest. Any fruit left will be a target for infestation.

If this fruit become infested and remains on site, or is not destroyed effectively, QFF that eventually emerge will find evergreen plants to take refuge in over the winter or until the next nearby crop ripens. In Victoria QFF overwinters as adult fly and become next season's QFF populations.

Explosion of populations

If for example, 10,000 fruit were produced from a row of small feijoa trees and active QFF control measures were not undertaken, it is quite possible for over 120,000 mature adult QFF to emerge from this fruit over a month. As feijoas are one of the last fruiting plants before the onset of winter, adult QFF may find refuge in surrounding evergreen foliage and survive winter. With 50 per cent of the QFF population female (60,000 in this example) and given each female may lay up to 2,000 eggs in its lifetime these feijoa-bred flies would cause massive problems in the coming season. The following spring, the number of adult flies on the landscape ready to mate would cause a population explosion.

Destroying infested fruit

It is essential to pick up or remove all fruit that is not wanted and destroy it before larvae can leave the fruit and pupate in the ground. Infested fruit containing eggs and larvae can be destroyed by:

- Maceration of fruit (e.g. garden mulcher)
- Solarise fruit by placing in black plastic bags, seal and leave in sun for a week
- Freeze fruit until solid (about 2 days)
- Microwave fruit for 3 to 5 minutes (depending on quantity)
- Run fruit eating animals to clean up fallen fruit – chickens, ducks and guinea fowl eat fallen fruit and scratch out QFF larvae and pupae from the soil.

For more information on QFF control, collect an information pack from your Council's Customer Service Centre.

Funded by the Victorian Government's Managing Fruit Fly Regional Grants Program

**NO FLIES
ON US!**
Let's stop Queensland
Fruit Fly

