

QUEENSLAND FRUIT FLY GROWER'S UPDATE

The current fruit fly season

The new Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF) season for 2019/20 started during the week of 21 August 2019 when traps around the Goulburn Murray Valley (GMV) recorded new flies. As of the week of 14 November 2019, the GMV trapping grid's 402 traps have registered 1,270 QFF.

The current QFF population is made up of a small number of adults and a large number of immatures – eggs and larvae in fruit and pupae in the soil beneath their host plants.

Fruit fly trends

If the fruit fly prevalence pattern in the GMV follows previous years, there will be an upsurge of QFF captures during the third week of November. QFF numbers will increase until the summer peak is reached which is typically late January/early February. This peak represents overlapping generations and occurs while there is an abundance of fruit of many types and species at this time of the year in urban areas.

Although there is some uncertainty, it seems QFF move out of towns and into commercial production areas during the late summer. It is for this reason that so much work can be done in urban areas to control fruit flies – not only to improve production in home gardens but to reduce the spread of flies into nearby horticultural production areas.

DECEMBER ACTIONS

Harvesting and pruning

Right now, most fruit flies are in their immature stage in infested fruit while some will be in the soil. You can reduce the potential number of flies prevalent in the summer when most fruit is being harvested in urban areas, by removing and destroying all fruits that are not wanted, or if they can be used green, or can ripen after harvest on the shelf, to harvest them early (before they can be infested).

Check fruit in house gardens

Commercial growers who have fruiting plants in their house gardens should check these fruit as they will be potential hosts for QFF. Even though the volumes of such fruit may be small in any given area they can be used by QFF as a population 'stepping stone' from a small number of flies to a population explosion.

We know that one QFF female can produce as many as 400 female offspring in her lifetime. We also know that one large fruit, such as a QFF-infested grapefruit, can produce more than 50 QFF. It is important to remember, even a few unmanaged fruit can lead to a huge population explosion at a later date when there is more fruit around.

It is also a good idea to check fruit manually for black sting marks and fruit tissue softening caused by QFF eggs and larvae inside.

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

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ON US!**
Let's stop Queensland
Fruit Fly

