



Queensland Fruit Fly Goulburn Murray Valley February Outlook 2021

This information has been commissioned by the Goulburn Murray Valley (GMV) Fruit Fly Project and is funded by the Victorian Government's Managing Fruit Fly Regional Grants Program. Use of this material in its complete and original format, acknowledging its source, is permitted, however unauthorised alterations to the text or content is not permitted.

Extra vigilance required

A severe shortage of pickers as a result of covid restrictions and the inability of pickers to enter Victoria has forced some growers to leave fruit on their trees, creating the perfect environment for Queensland fruit fly (Qfly) to thrive. Growers should remain on high alert across the GMV region as unpicked fruit, combined with the effects of optimal weather conditions has the potential to severely impact market opportunities.

GMV monitoring traps have registered a substantial increase in Qfly numbers in January 2021 compared to January 2020.

Growers should remove all unwanted fruiting material and continue monitoring activities regardless of their location. It is advisable to ensure trap, bait and approved pesticide supplies are well stocked in readiness for Qfly identification. It is essential to make sure any pesticides in storage are within their use-by dates and are still approved for use in your state and on your fruit type.

La Niña and fruit fly

The La Niña weather pattern and summer rain is providing the perfect environment for fruit fly numbers to expand rapidly. Action now is essential in order to disrupt the multiplying effect which typically occurs at this time of year, with a larger than normal influx anticipated due to the high humidity currently experienced across much of the region and Victoria. A La Niña event may last between one to eight years, with a continued focus and concerted effort required to protect the GMV economy and export markets against Qfly.

All areas of the GMV should be on high alert for increased fruit fly activity and take action to minimise the impact of the pest. The La Niña weather pattern results in more rainfall along with increased soil moisture and humidity which increases micro bacterial growth, creating another protein food source for the female Qfly.

Home gardeners in particular should be aware that if fruit fly is not managed there is a high probability that they will migrate into commercial orchards and exacerbate increasing pressure on growers from fruit fly. Action now by home gardeners and property owners is critical to help reduce the spread of Qfly to commercial crops later in the season and into autumn.

GMV Regional Fruit Fly Project





Hot spot areas identified

The GMV regional trapping grid has identified Qfly pressure across the region and provides essential population tracking data.

Current urban Qfly hot spots include:

- Shepparton
- Kyabram
- Nagambie
- Numurkah
- Cobram
- Mooroopna
- Merrigum
- Avenel
- Yarrawonga
- Barooga

Growers should remove all unwanted fruiting material and continue monitoring activities regardless of their location. It is advisable to ensure trap, bait and approved pesticide supplies are well stocked in readiness for Qfly identification. It is essential to make sure any pesticides in storage are within their use-by dates and are still approved for use in your state and on your fruit type.

Free tree removal program

The removal of unmanaged fruit trees eliminates a potential breeding ground and helps protect the region against fruit fly. Property owners with fruit trees they no longer want or find difficult to manage, can apply to have them removed free of charge through the Free Fruit Tree Removal Program. The program has seen the removal of unmanaged fruit trees and plants from orchards, private residences and public areas such as nature strips, roadsides, channel banks and reserves. More than 95,000 unmanaged fruit trees have been removed across the GMV to date. The removal of these host plants is highly effective in the control of fruit fly.

Collect an information pack from your local participating Council and complete and return the tree removal form to have your unwanted fruit tree removed.

Advice for home gardeners

Home gardeners and property owners can help in the fight against Qfly by undertaking a few simple actions. Urban fruit flies identified in built up, township areas are typically the cause of new generations emerging in commercial orchards in late summer and autumn. Home gardeners should be aware that their efforts to control Qfly will be of immense use to commercial growers and the entire community in autumn 2021.

Essential strategies for home gardeners with a fruit tree or vegetable patch include:

- monitoring through trapping
- regular inspection of fruit
- use of baits and netting
- pick fruit early or as it ripens
- dispose of Qfly effected fruit and vegetables correctly after solarising in the sun or microwave

GMV Regional Fruit Fly Project





Community-wide monitoring and protection against Qfly will allow home garden producers to enjoy the benefits of fewer Qfly destroying their produce, in addition to assisting their commercial neighbours.

Goulburn Murray Valley Fruit Fly Project

For assistance in managing Qfly, contact the Project Coordinator at the GMV Fruit Fly Office by phoning (03) 5871 9222 or emailing, gmvfruitfly@moira.vic.gov.au. For more information on fruit fly control and area wide management strategies visit www.fruitflycontrol.com.au

This report was produced and supplied by the GMV Fruit Fly Project.

GMV Regional Fruit Fly Project

