



MEDIA RELEASE

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Call to action as fruit fly season hots up

Although the benign start to the northern Victorian summer has been welcome, householders and commercial fruit growers are being warned that Queensland Fruit Fly (Qfly) activity is hotting up.

The Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area (GSPFA) says the mild conditions have seen the Qfly season take off in the past few weeks.

“The temperatures in the mid-30s and the humid weather are made to order for Qfly,” said regional coordinator Narelle Beattie.

“In addition, the growing conditions have also been perfect for some of our fruit varieties, so there are heavy crops on backyard trees, and that equates to high risk,” she said.

“Our field officers have had to hit the ground running in 2021 because we’re receiving a lot of reports of infested fruit and unfortunately we’re seeing some really heavy infestations.

“We’d remind everyone to pick up fruit that falls off your trees and put it in a plastic bag in the sun for 7-10 days – we’re all doing our bit for our neighbours and community by making sure we dispose of all infested fruit correctly.”

But Ms Beattie said she was encouraged that the phones were also running hot with requests for removal of fruit trees.

“The upside is that the ripening fruit is prompting quite a number of people to decide that they just don’t need the hassle or the mess anymore, and are asking for trees to be removed under our free tree removal program,” she said.

“We can do the hard work and remove any trees prone to fruit fly that aren’t wanted, and our professional arborists have removed around 8000 trees from properties between Yelta and Kerang over the past three years.”

Ms Beattie said it was pleasing to see an increasing number of home gardeners being successful in growing fresh produce.

“If you love the satisfaction of producing clean healthy fruit, and if you’re proactive and happy to put in the hard work that’s needed, it’s fantastic to see some real success stories in our communities,” she said.

“We’re only too happy to help out with advice and information – and at this time, the advice is that insect nets need to be in place before fruit set now for fruit and fruiting vegetables prone to fruit fly, such as tomatoes, capsicums, chillies and eggplants.

“The conditions this season have also been great for growing vegetables. There are so many varieties that aren’t preferred hosts for fruit fly and a perfect option for people who still want some home-grown produce without the worry,” she said.

To register for free tree removal, and for many more tips to help control Qfly in the garden, contact GSPFA on 03 5022 0327 or visit the website at www.pestfreearea.com.au.

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