



The Place To Be

# Media release

From the Department of Primary Industries

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## HELP SWAT FRUIT FLY OUT OF SHEPPARTON

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) will soon be suspending its Queensland fruit fly (QFF) eradication program in Shepparton, which commenced after an outbreak earlier in the year.

DPI Plant Standards Program Manager Bill Ashcroft thanked Shepparton residents for their cooperation during the program and reminded them that now is the time to prepare for next season.

“During the winter we see little evidence of QFF and these cooler months are the best time to prepare gardens for control of fruit fly during the next fruit-growing season,” Mr Ashcroft said.

The three important messages for backyard fruit growers are:

- Prune your fruit trees to a manageable height where all fruit can be reached for picking.
- If you know there is always more fruit than you can use, remove excess fruit whilst it is still small and before it starts to ripen, especially the fruit that is in hard-to-reach places. This removes potential egg laying sites and results in healthier fruit.
- Remove all unwanted fruit trees. At this time of year, there are few leaves on the trees, making removal more manageable. Re-plant with non fruit-bearing trees.

“Home gardeners need to maintain good gardening practices to ensure that QFF management becomes easier in the next fruit-growing season,” Mr Ashcroft said.

“Shepparton lies within the Fruit Fly Exclusion Zone (FFEZ) and many local businesses are supported by the fruit-growing industry in the Goulburn Valley. Commercial growers rely on residents managing their gardens properly to help keep QFF out of the Zone.”

Extra points to consider over the cooler months:

- Citrus is often the only fruit around, so it is important to make sure citrus trees are well maintained.
- Remove ripe fruit from trees so it can't provide food for QFF as the weather warms up in spring. If fruit does fall to the ground, collect it immediately and place in a sealed plastic bag. Leave in the sun for several days, or place in a freezer for two days to destroy any maggots, and then dispose of the bag in the rubbish bin.
- Do not travel with fruit, and especially do not bring fresh fruit home from warmer northern climates. Fruit infested with fruit fly eggs or maggots may appear to be perfect on the outside, so the infestation may not be discovered until it is too late.

DPI will recommence its Shepparton eradication program in September.

For more information visit the DPI website [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/psb](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/psb) or call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

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