

Queensland fruit fly (Qfly) Willagee eradication program 2024-25

Frequently asked questions

Updated 20 January 2025

References to host fruit in these frequently asked questions apply to home-grown or shop-bought fruit from hosts of Queensland fruit fly (Qfly), which include some vegetables such as tomato, chilli, eggplant and capsicum, and ornamental plants such as clivia, Indian hawthorn. See the list of Qfly hosts in the Quarantine Area Notice and on our website.

What is Qfly?

Qfly is an Australian fruit fly native to Queensland. Qfly is one of the most serious pests of fruit and vegetables in Australia, infesting more than 300 species of fruit, fruiting vegetables and ornamental plants and impacting a range of horticulture industries and their access to valuable markets. Qfly destroys host fruit, making it inedible. See the [Queensland fruit fly](#) webpage for more information.

What are Qfly host plants?

Host plants are any plants with fruit that Qfly can breed in. The list is extensive and includes citrus, banana, stone fruit, olive, avocado, mango, passionfruit, tomato, capsicum, and chilli. Qfly also destroys the fruit of ornamental plants such as clivia, lilly pilly and Indian hawthorn. See the list of [Qfly host plants](#).

How do Qfly affect host fruit?

Qfly maggots (larvae) destroy affected fruit, making it inedible. When the adult female Qfly stings host fruit to lay eggs, it introduces bacteria that causes rot. Affected fruit may show skin discolouration around the sting marks and rapid decomposition, which induces decay and early fruit drop. Damage is also caused as maggots develop and feed in fruit.

Qfly damage to fruit is most severe during summer.

How long do Qfly live?

The Qfly lifecycle varies in summer and winter because cooler temperatures and shorter daylight hours lengthen the time required for Qfly to complete a full lifecycle:

- in winter, the lifecycle is between 52 and 100 days.
- in summer, it is between 36 and 60 days.

How did Qfly get into WA?

Tracing the source of Qfly can be difficult to determine and DPIRD has not determined the source of the Qfly found in Willagee. The priority is eradicating Qfly.

Qfly Quarantine Area Notice

Are requirements under the Quarantine Area Notice legal?

Yes. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has a legislated responsibility to eradicate Qfly and protect WA's commercial fruit and vegetable industries.

Eradication depends on the compliance of all residents with Quarantine Area Notice requirements and the directions of authorised DPIRD personnel.

Quarantine Area Notices are issued under regulation 60 of the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Regulations 2013. Failure to comply with the Quarantine Area Notice could result in remedial action, a fine or both.

Section 65 of the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 provides the power for an authorised inspector to visit, inspect and undertake eradication activities on your property. DPIRD staff will work with residents to access gardens at a convenient time to apply treatments and checks. While we can legally enter without consent, we prefer cooperation – it is faster and more effective.

Refusing to provide staff access or preventing staff from completing their work may result in a fine or prosecution.

What is the Quarantine Area?

The Quarantine Area consists of both the Red Zone and Orange Zone, covering a 15 km radius around Qfly detection points.

The Red Zone is the 1.5 km radius area from Qfly detections. It includes parts of the local governments of Melville, Cockburn, East Fremantle and Fremantle. Most eradication activity occurs in the Red Zone.

The Orange Zone covers the area in a 15 km radius from the detection point and is the area of the QA that is not part of the Red Zone. The Orange Zone acts as a buffer zone to further prevent further spread of the pest.

See the Quarantine Area Notice and interactive map on our Qfly updates webpage to check which zone your property is located in.

How long will the Quarantine Area Notice (QAN) remain in place?

Under the Australia's National Fruit Fly Management Protocol, reinstatement of pest area freedom depends on the absence of wild fruit fly adults and larvae in the Quarantine Area.

The current Quarantine Area Notice is in effect until 6 April 2025. This date may be extended if a Qfly continues to be detected.

You must continue to comply with all requirements of the Quarantine Area Notice, including host fruit removal, treatment and movement, until pest area freedom has been achieved and the Quarantine Area Notice has been lifted or expired.

How will Qfly be eradicated?

Qfly eradication relies on a joint effort between DPIRD, residents and industry.

In the Red Zone, DPIRD will visit properties to:

- check for the presence of Qfly host plants (and mark them with a pink tag)
- apply bait to host or other suitable plants
- collect host fruit samples to check in the laboratory for the absence of Qfly larvae
- inspect for compliance with the Quarantine Area Notice, including:
 - ensure ripe or ripening host fruit and vegetables are regularly removed from plants. There should be no fallen fruit on the ground, and
 - host fruit and vegetables are correctly treated and disposed of.

DPIRD will also bait street and park trees that could shelter Qfly.

Residents in the Red Zone must comply with requirements of the Quarantine Area Notice, including treatment and movement restrictions for host fruit.

What do I need to do with host fruit on my property?

All residents in the Red Zone must comply with requirements of the Quarantine Area Notice for the management and movement of host fruit and vegetables:

- Assist in breaking the Qfly lifecycle by stripping **all** fruit and fruiting vegetables from host plants in your garden, regardless of ripeness
- Treat fruit and fruit waste (before disposal) using one of the following methods:
 - cook (e.g boil or microwave)
 - freeze for at least 24 hours
 - solarise (secure host fruit in a sealed black bag and place it on a hard surface in direct sunlight for at least seven days)
 - process (e.g slice, dice, blend/puree, juice, press or pickle)
- Strip pruned branches of all host fruit before leaving out for a green waste verge collection or putting into green waste bins/bags. Correctly treat and dispose of all fruit removed.
- Correctly dispose of hosts fruits - once treated, securely bag Qfly host fruit and waste and put in the general waste (not in the green waste bin).
- Do not remove host fruit from the Quarantine Area (unless treated).

My age and/or medical condition prevents me from being able to meet these requirements. What are my options?

We understand some residents may face challenges due to age or medical conditions. In the first instance, please see if a friend, relative, carer or neighbour can assist with fruit removal and disposal.

If you still cannot receive assistance, please let us know as soon as possible so we can arrange a visit to assess your situation on a case-by-case basis. Contact the Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS) on (08) 9368 3080 or email qfly@dpiird.wa.gov.au.

My trees are too high to pick fruit from. What should I do?

We don't want anyone to put their safety at risk. If you have assessed the situation and believe the fruit is too high for you to safely reach, please let us know so we can arrange a visit to assess your situation on a case-by-case basis. Contact the Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS) on (08) 9368 3080 or email qfly@dpiird.wa.gov.au.

Can host fruit be left inside on a bench to ripen after being removed from a host plant?

No, fruit cannot be left inside to ripen as there is still a risk the fruit can be stung by Qfly or allow larvae to grow within already infested fruit. As per the requirements, picked fruit must be eaten immediately or be treated through cooking, freezing, processing or solarising.

What is processing?

Processing involves slicing and dicing, blending or pureeing, juicing, brining, or pickling. Qfly can breed in whole or large pieces of host fruit and vegetables. Processing breaks the fruit into a size that is too small for Qfly to breed in and destroy any potential eggs and larvae in the host fruit.

What is solarising?

Solarising is the process of using sunlight to heat something. Qfly host fruits are solarised by securing them in a black plastic bag and placing the bag on a hard surface in direct sunlight for at least 7 days.

Weather variations can influence the effect of solarising so if the weather is cloudy, leave the materials to solarise for longer.

Solarising is a good option for treating large amounts of fruit, such as mulberry, olive, and fig and the fruits and berries of some ornamental host plants.

What can I expect during an inspection?

At the initial visit by DPIRD, you will be asked for your contact details and potentially your preferred day (or 2 days for residents closest to Qfly detections).

DPIRD personnel who visit your property will ask to enter your property as part of the Qfly eradication campaign to:

- check for Qfly host plants, and tag with a pink ribbon. Because the list of potential hosts is so vast, DPIRD may check for host plants even if you advise that you don't have any
- bait suitable host or other plants
- collect host fruit samples to check in the laboratory for Qfly larvae
- check you are complying with the Quarantine Area Notice. This includes that:
 - **all** fruit and fruiting vegetables are removed from host plants in your garden, regardless of ripeness. There should be no host fruit on the ground.
 - host fruit is correctly treated and disposed of.

Movement

Can I take host fruit outside the Red Zone?

No. You must not take fresh home-grown or shop-bought host fruit and vegetables outside the Red Zone unless treated. It is recommended that both home-grown and store-bought host fruit is immediately refrigerated until eaten, or treated and disposed of correctly.

Can I take whole host fruit and vegetables to work or school to eat?

No. Host fruit must first be treated (cooked or frozen) or processed by juicing, cooking, or slicing and dicing. The quickest and most common way of spreading Qfly is the movement of untreated host fruit and vegetables because they may contain Qfly eggs and larvae, even if they do not look infested.

Can I take fresh fruit salad out of the Red Zone?

Yes, provided fresh host fruit is sliced into small, bite-sized pieces. Fruit waste (e.g. rind, peel, core) must be treated, bagged and disposed of in the general waste bin.

Can I give fruit and vegetables to my neighbour or anyone else in my suburb?

Do not move Qfly host fruit within or outside of the Red Zone unless it has been treated or processed. Consider making a salad, jam, juice or cook host fruit to share.

If I refrigerate my fruit and vegetables for 24 hours, can I move it out of the Red Zone?

No. Qfly host fruit and vegetables can only be moved out of the Red Zone after they have been treated (frozen for 24 hours, cooked, solarised or processed). Immediately after picking host fruit from your garden or bringing store-bought host fruits onto your property, refrigerate until you are ready to eat them.

What about supermarkets? Can they still sell fruit/veg?

Yes. Supermarkets can continue to sell fruit and vegetables. Supermarkets, distributors are required to keep produce under secure conditions (Fully enclosed or screened buildings, cold-rooms, vehicles or other facilities free from gaps or other entry points greater than 1.6 mm). DPIRD is working closely with retailers and industry to ensure these conditions are met and host fruit and fruiting vegetables are not displayed outdoors. After purchasing fruit and vegetables, ensure they remain covered until you get home to prevent Qfly from being able to sting fruit.

Can farmers markets in the Red Zone still operate?

Yes. Farmers markets can still operate in the Red Zone, however they must meet the requirements of the Quarantine Area Notice. This includes ensuring host fruit and fruiting vegetables are securely covered with plastic wrap, tarpaulins, hessian, mesh or other coverings when entering and remaining in the Red Zone.

What should I do if I accidentally moved my host fruit and vegetables out of the Red Zone?

Let DPIRD know as soon as possible so we can assess the risk and consider in our surveillance efforts. Contact the Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS) on (08) 9368 3080 or email qfly@dpiird.wa.gov.au.

Disposal

How should I dispose of fruit and vegetables?

All shop-bought or home-grown fruit must be treated before disposal. Once treated, securely bag and bin in the general waste bin – not the organic waste bin or green waste bag/bin.

Can I throw out shop-bought fruit and vegetables as normal, or put scraps in my compost?

No, do not place any shop-bought or home-grown host fruit in your compost or green waste bin, unless it has been treated.

Do the same treatment, disposal and movement requirements apply for host fruit grown outside of the Red Zone that I bring into the zone?

Yes.

In the Red Zone, can I compost Qfly host fruit and scraps or put them in my worm farm?

No.

Can I take juiced host fruit out of the Red Zone?

Yes, juicing is a form of processing and destroys any Qfly eggs or larvae. Remember you must treat the fruit scraps before disposal.

In the Red Zone, can I feed host fruit and vegetables to my chickens?

Qfly can breed in whole or large pieces of host fruit and vegetables and host fruit cannot be left uncovered on the ground due to the potential for Qfly to breed in it. You must not feed Qfly host fruit to chickens unless it has been treated or processed (e.g. sliced, diced, cooked, pureed).

Can I be fined by my local government for putting treated bagged fruit and vegetables into general waste bins?

This is a matter for your local government. If you are concerned about being fined or have been fined, contact your local government waste education team.

Can I bury fruit and vegetables during the Qfly outbreak?

No, because Qfly larvae can survive being buried deep (up to 1 m) in the ground.

My neighbour's host fruit has fallen on my property. Who is responsible for its disposal?

You are responsible for correctly managing (treating and disposing of) any host fruit in your yard. Remove ripe and ripening fruit hanging into your yard every 3 days. Treat, securely bag and dispose in the general waste bin. There should be no fruit on the ground.

If you cut overhanging branches from your neighbour's property back to the boundary line, you must strip all host fruit from the branches that have been pruned and treat and dispose of it in the general waste bin. Once the branches have been stripped of all fruit, you can leave them out for green waste collection or put them into your green waste bin/bag or skip bins provided by your local government.

More information about responsibilities for overhanging branches can be found on the [Legal Aid WA website](#).

Eradication program activities

When will DPIRD visit my property?

The priority for DPIRD personnel is visiting properties in the Red Zone at least once or week, or twice weekly for properties close to the infected properties. Some properties may not need to be inspected as there are no host species present.

If you have received a contact card in your mailbox asking you to contact DPIRD, do so as soon as possible as a property inspection is necessary.

DPIRD personnel also inspect some properties in the wider Orange Zone.

To determine whether your property is in the Red Zone or Orange Zone, see the [interactive map](#) on our website.

What products are used in the eradication program?

A combination of:

- organic bait applied to host plants. For more information, see the [Naturalure fruit fly bait FAQs](#).



- small cardboard lures impregnated with a minute amount of a common product containing fipronil, to attract and kill male Qfly. These are hung in trees out of reach of children and pets. For more information, see the [Qfly lure fact sheet](#).



- separate to the Qfly eradication program, DPIRD uses lure traps to monitor male Qfly numbers and determine the success of eradication activities. For more information, see the [fact sheet](#).



How do I determine whether DPIRD has visited my neighbour, who has fruit trees?

DPIRD is prioritising property visits based on the host plants present and property access requirements. This means that not all properties in a street will be visited at the same time. If possible, discuss any concerns with your neighbour.

Why doesn't DPIRD strip all host fruit?

It is the owner/occupier's responsibility under the Quarantine Area Notice to remove all fruit from host plants. There should be no fruit on the ground.

Please let DPIRD personnel know if you are unable to meet the requirements of the Quarantine Area Notice due to age or a medical condition and don't have a friend, relative, neighbour or carer who can assist.

How long does an inspection take?

Inspection times vary depending on access, property size, hosts present and discussion. About 30 minutes is required for an initial inspection.

Can I cut down/trim my plants that DPIRD has marked with a pink tag?

Yes. There are no restrictions to cutting down or trimming a tree with a pink tag on your own property however, any host fruit must be removed and either eaten or treated before disposal.

Pink tape may be used to mark a host tree or a plant. If trimming a tree, please reattach the tape to the tree, if possible.

If I notice fruit fly sting marks or larvae (maggots) in my fruit, do I need to report it to DPIRD?

DPIRD would appreciate you making the fruit available to collect at our next visit for testing. Double bag the sample and keep at room temperature until DPIRD next visits.

You can also report suspect Qfly using the MyPestGuide Reporter App or website (mypestguide.dpird.wa.gov.au) or our Pest and Disease Information Service on 9368 3080 or qfly@dpird.wa.gov.au.

Other questions

Where can I find more information?

- Website: wa.gov.au/qfly
- Pest and Disease Information Service on 9368 3080 or qfly@dpird.wa.gov.au.

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