

October 2014

Correct chemical use essential for fruit fly control

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is reminding fruit growers of the potentially harmful nature of incorrect chemical use for treating Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF).

DPI Leader QFF Control and Monitoring, Daryl Cooper, said some fruit growers, particularly home gardeners, are continuing to use unregistered, out of date and inappropriate chemicals for QFF treatment.

“Not only can incorrect chemical use have a significant environmental impact, but it can also have a less effective result on managing these pests and can potentially even cause harm to the grower,” Mr Cooper said.

“Home gardeners play a crucial role in the control of this pest and they need to be aware that traditional cover sprays that contained fenthion or dimethoate are no longer permitted in home gardens.

“Chemicals to treat QFF are clearly labelled, and include instructions on how to use and properly apply them.”

Mr Cooper said baiting is the most successful control method for QFF when used correctly.

“Especially when baiting is used in conjunction with other control measures, fruit growers will see vast improvements in controlling these pests,” Mr Cooper said.

“Now is the time to be setting up traps to monitor for QFF and spraying high risk fruit such as citrus.

“Good garden and orchard maintenance, such as removing all fallen fruit, and pruning trees to a manageable size will also help control QFF.

“Properly disposing of infected fruit using heat treatment is also crucial to ensure the flies and maggots are killed.

“Heading into the warmer months, other at risk fruits include stonefruit and tomatoes, capsicums and chillies.”

Mr Cooper said growers can make their own, inexpensive traps and put in place precautions now to ensure their fruit and vegetables are pest free.

More information, including how to make a trap is available at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/insects/qff>

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