

Check your fruit & vegetables for Queensland fruit fly



Do you know how to tell if your fruit or vegetables are infested with Queensland fruit fly (Qfly) and what to do if they are?

This fact sheet explains how to check for Qfly and what to do if you find it.

Qfly only lay eggs in fruit or vegetables that are still attached to the tree or plant.

Start checking your produce when it has reached full size but before it shows signs of colour change.

Qfly can lay eggs in fruit that is still hard and green.

How to check for Qfly

- Select fruit or vegetables from different sides of the tree/plant and different heights of the canopy.

- Look for early ripening fruit or signs of damage.

- Carefully cut fruit open with a sharp knife and look for larvae. They can be very small – about 2mm – when they hatch.

- Look for other signs of infestation, including small black spots on the surface of the fruit or sap seeping from it.

At a glance

Inspect fruit and vegetables regularly for signs of Qfly

Remove infested produce as soon as possible and destroy it

Maintain good garden hygiene by picking up fallen fruit

Collect infested fruit in a large plastic bag or sealed drum, secure at the top, and leave in the sun for 7–10 days

Dispose of fruit in your rubbish or green bin when all larvae are dead

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How to identify Qfly larvae

- Qfly larvae are creamy white in colour and 2–9mm long.
- They are plumper at the tail end than the head. A black feeding hook may be seen on the head of mature larvae.
- Usually 2–10 eggs are laid per piece of fruit.
- Larvae will curl up and flick or jump when exposed.

How quickly to respond

- Eggs will hatch into larvae within 1–2 days.
- It only takes 7–4 days for larvae to complete their development. Fruit needs to be removed as soon as possible to stop the Qfly lifecycle.
- If left on the tree or plant, infested fruit will prematurely drop to the ground and larvae will crawl into the soil within 24 hours. It pays to regularly collect and destroy all fallen fruit and keep the ground clean at all times.

Pick up all fallen fruit to stop fruit fly larvae going into the ground and continuing their lifecycle.

How to destroy and dispose of infested fruit

- Infested fruit and vegetables can be boiled or microwaved to kill larvae.
- Larger amounts of fruit and vegetables can be placed in a plastic or compostable bag and tied at the top (double bag for extra strength) or in an airtight plastic drum or bucket with a lid. Make sure there are no holes for larvae or flies to escape.
- Leave bags or drums in the sun for 7–10 days or until larvae are dead. They can then be disposed of in the general waste or green bin.
- When disposing of fruit in a council green bin, ensure the fruit is in an AS certified compostable bag or remove from plastic bag and place loosely in the bin.
- Alternatively, infested fruit can be deeply buried. It must be covered with a minimum of 50cm of soil.

Dispose of infested or unwanted fruit through deep burial, double bagging and placing in the sun, slashing, or mulching.

