

Fruit fly exclusion netting

The simplest way to protect your fruit



Queensland fruit fly (Qfly) attacks a wide range of fruits and fruiting vegetables, leaving them inedible.

Controlling Qfly in your garden can be very challenging.

However, there are various strategies you can implement to protect home-grown produce from infestation.

Creating a physical barrier between the flies and your fruit with fine mesh netting is the simplest way to grow clean fruit.

Insect nets can be purchased from nursery or hardware suppliers as well as online.

Ensure netting is very fine (not bird netting) and is UV stable.

Nets are available in a number of sizes, but it's easier to use a larger net and gather any slack at the bottom rather than trying to stretch a smaller net over the tree.

Buying a larger net also allows room for the tree to grow over summer.

At a glance

Purchase a net made from fine insect mesh

Prune your fruit trees to <2m

Cover your whole tree with the net as soon as fruit sets

Tie net around the trunk with no gaps

Thin fruit if needed and remove any fruit touching the net

Repair any holes in the net after harvesting ready for next year

Fact sheet: Fruit fly exclusion netting

Pruning your trees in winter to about 2m high and less than 2m wide will help to ensure you can comfortably cover them with a net.

Do not cover the tree before fruit has set. You want to allow beneficial insects, such as bees, access to pollinate your fruit.

Put on the net when fruit is about 2cm in size.

A long stick, broom or PVC conduit can help you get the net over the entire tree.

Tie the diagonally opposite corners of the net together around the trunk of the tree. Rope or string may help to secure it to the tree.

Roll the open edges together and hold with a bulldog clip or peg. Fruit flies are only about 5mm in size, so don't leave any gaps for them to get through.

Leave any extra netting loose at the bottom so you can readjust the netting as the tree grows.

Keep an eye on your net to ensure it is still fully enclosed, the tree branches haven't created any holes, and there is no fruit touching the net.

It is important to remove any fruit touching the net as flies will sting fruit from outside the net.

Check to see if fruit is ripe by opening the net, picking some of the crop and re-closing the net.

When all the fruit is ripe, strip the tree and remove the net.

You can pack the net away to use next year or transfer it to a tree with a later crop.

Make sure you repair any damage before putting them away. Lay nets on the ground to check for holes. They can be repaired with nylon thread.

Fact: Qfly can lay eggs in green fruit, so don't leave it too late to cover your trees – generally six to eight weeks before ripening.

