

FRUIT FLY EXCLUSION NETTING

PROTECT YOUR FRUIT FROM QUEENSLAND FRUIT FLY BY COVERING YOUR TREES WITH INSECT NETS

Queensland Fruit Fly attacks a wide range of fruits and fruiting vegetables, leaving them inedible. Managing QFF in your garden can be very challenging. However, there are various strategies you can implement to protect home-grown produce from infestation.

This fact sheet outlines how to use insect nets to protect your produce from fruit fly. The use of a physical barrier can stop QFF from laying eggs in your fruit.

The first step to protecting your fruit starts in winter when it is important to prune trees to about 2 metres high and less than 2 metres wide, so nets can fit over them.



Tie net around the tree trunk. Rope or string may help to secure it to the tree.

AT A GLANCE

- A physical barrier such as an insect net is a good way to protect your fruit from Queensland Fruit Fly.
- Insect nets can be purchased from local nursery or hardware suppliers or are available online. Ensure net is made from very fine mesh.
- Cover your trees with nets about 6–8 weeks before ripening.
- Fruit flies are only 5–8mm in size, so don't leave any gaps.
- When you have picked all your early ripening fruit you can pack the net away until next year, or transfer it to a tree with a later crop.



Nets are available in a number of sizes, however, it's easier to use a larger net and take up any slack at the bottom than trying to stretch a smaller net over the tree. Buying a larger net also allows room for the tree to grow over summer.

Insect nets can be purchased from local nursery or hardware suppliers and are also available online. Ensure netting is very fine (not bird netting) and is UV stable.

Do not cover the tree before the fruit has set; you want to allow beneficial insects, such as bees, access to pollinate your fruit. When fruit is about 2cm in size, put the net over the tree.

Keep a regular 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.

Tie the diagonally opposite corners of the net together around the trunk of the tree, a rope or string may help in securing 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 that as the tree grows taller, you can re-adjust the netting.



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



Fruit fly can lay eggs into green fruit, so don't leave it too late to cover your trees – generally 6–8 weeks before ripening.

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

Check fruit to see if it 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. Then you can pack the net away until next year, or transfer it to a tree with a later crop.



Lay nets on the ground to check for holes. They can be repaired with nylon thread.