

Important biosecurity information

about Ground Treatment

14 MARCH 2018

Queensland Fruit fly has been detected in Tasmania. Our fruit industry and the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) need your help to eradicate this pest from Tasmania.

Why?

Eradication of Queensland fruit fly from Tasmania is very important. This insect can physically damage our fruit and some vegetables. It has the potential to significantly restrict trade of fresh Tasmanian fruit into valuable markets in Australia and overseas. If left unchecked, the presence of fruit fly in Tasmania will have negative effects for our whole state economy.

What is ground treatment?

Ground treatment is a key element in ridding an infested property of pest fruit fly. The purpose of ground treatment is to kill the fruit fly pupae in the ground to prevent the emergence of flies.

It is a treatment which occurs to patches of ground at risk of hosting fruit fly pupae. It is not a treatment applied to the foliage or branches of trees.

Which properties may be subject to ground treatment?

Usually only infected properties. Ground treatment is applied on properties where larvae have been found, and may be used on properties next door to infected properties if there are any fruit trees that overhang the boundary.

Which patches of ground are targeted?

The minimum treatment of an infected property is the soil beneath a tree with infested fruit. This area is the soil from the trunk to one metre beyond the outer perimeter of foliage (the drip line.)

Other areas of an infected property that may also need ground treatment are:

- Areas where any fruit has fallen to the ground and rolled a distance away from the infested host plant;
- Any areas where potentially infested fruit may have been used as mulch or placed onto a compost pile or into a compost bin;
- Any other area where potentially infested compost may already have been used;
- The area/s beneath other host plants on the property that have mature or semi-mature fruit, or which have finished fruiting.

How often does ground treatment occur on an infected property?

Once only.

What happens after the ground treatment is applied?

The area treated is covered with plastic which will be dug into the soil around the perimeter and weighted down. A DPIPWE officer accredited in chemical application or authorised contractors under supervision will conduct the ground treatment. A DPIPWE officer or contractor will inspect the ground sheet weekly to ensure it is still in place.

Residents are encouraged to avoid walking on the covered area if possible. The sheet will be removed by DPIPWE staff or contractors at the end of the treatment period (which may be up to eight weeks). If the sheet is damaged or comes loose, the property-owner or resident should contact DPIPWE on the number provided.

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What is the solution that is being applied to the ground?

The solution is Karate Zeon. The active ingredient is 250 g/L Lambda-Cyhalothrin. A Material Data Sheet for this product is available on request.

Ground treatment is one element of ridding a property of pest fruit fly. What else happens on the property?

Fruit is stripped from the infected tree/s and from any other trees being ground treated. Stripping applies only to fruit. Foliage and branches are not stripped.

Spot baiting (see separate information sheet) is likely to be used as an additional measure.

Traps are installed so that any continued presence of fruit flies may be detected. These traps are checked, usually twice weekly. Traps are used to detect fruit fly. They are not a tool to eradicate it. Eradication is achieved by spot baiting and by ground treatment.

Is the ground treatment safe?

The Material Data Sheet for the ground treatment is available on request. The solution is applied according to the product label conditions and APVMA permit 12961 by an accredited officer or contractors. Australia maintains a regime of registered agricultural and veterinary chemicals which are safe to use in accordance with the label conditions.

If it is so safe, why is the ground covered after treatment?

The coversheet is to protect the solution from moving off-site in the event of rain and to ensure that any emerging flies come into comprehensive contact with the treated soil. This provides an extra benefit in keeping people and pets away from the treated ground.

Can the spray be used on or near my vegetable patch or in areas where pets and children play?

The ground will be covered in plastic after spraying. It therefore will not be possible for plants to be cropped from the treated

area. If you are concerned about edible crops adjacent to the treated area, the conservative safety regime being applied means that the relevant withholding periods for these types of crops should be observed and residents will be advised of this.

The plastic covering the treated area should not be moved. As part of general good practice, children should be advised it is not a play area and pets such as dogs should be discouraged from romping on it.

Further conservative safety measures include not treating ground where waterways or open drains are in the immediate proximity.

Can I plant vegetables back into the treated area once the treatment period is over and plastic covering is removed?

Yes.

Where can I get further information?

The Biosecurity Tasmania officer supervising ground treatment in your area is available to answer questions alternatively you can contact **Biosecurity Tasmania** on **6165 3774** or visit www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/fruitfly.