

ROTARY ERADICATING HORTICULTURAL PEST

BELOW: President of the Rotary Club of Swan Hill Gail, left, with fellow member Muriel, Rotary Exchange Student Sophia and member Allan about to deliver fruit fly baits to Swan Hill households.



ABOVE: The Rotary Club of Robinvale Euston's youngest member, Grace Cassidy, with Rotary Friend Brian Handrek.

THE Queensland fruit fly is the major horticultural pest in the irrigated region of Sunraysia along the Murray-Darling rivers in NSW and Victoria. The damage it does to the economic value of crops, especially to exports, amounts to millions of dollars each year.

The Rotary clubs of the Great Sunraysia are working with the horticultural industry and government agencies on a massive trapping program to eradicate the pest. The clubs are concentrating on the residential areas – the area of greatest risk. Household fruit trees, the uncontrolled disposal of domestic fruit and vegetable waste and fruit brought into the region by travellers

are the three sources of the pest.

Three times a year, club members deliver traps to every household in the region and, in some cases, install them for elderly and disabled residents. Because each trap only catches flies from a radius of 15 metres, it is essential to get blanket coverage.

The growers operate a monoculture, so commercially fruit flies are much easier to control. However, households grow and consume a range of fruits ripening throughout the year and each one is a potential fruit fly host. The traps serve two purposes: the trap itself attracts female fruit flies and an associated amulet distracts the male fly from mating.

The clubs are rewarded with \$2 a trap for each delivery, with 28,000 traps delivered to households each time.

Some clubs use it as an opportunity to involve others in the distribution. Under team leader Gary Klippel, the Rotary Club of Mildura Deakin, Vic, manages a team of students from Mildura Senior College for its deliveries. Brian Englefield, of the Rotary Club of Robinvale Euston, Vic, is so committed to the cause he personally delivers traps to households in Merbein, Vic, as well, an hour and half from Robinvale. Other Rotary clubs involved are Irymple, Vic, Mildura, Vic, South Mildura, Vic, Wentworth, NSW, and Swan Hill, Vic.



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