



# HOW TO PROTECT GARDEN FRUIT TREES WITHOUT HARM TO WILDLIFE

**W**ith our ever-changing urban landscape, native wildlife has been adapting and to some extent, has become dependent on flowering and fruiting trees grown in our backyards. Drought, tree clearing and the ongoing loss of forested areas within our cities, make backyard fruit trees an important food resource for birds, possums and flying foxes.

**M**any people are happy to share their fruit with wildlife but for those who really want to enjoy the fruits of their labour, there are ways to protect crops in a wildlife friendly manner.

**RSPCA Qld.** is keen to promote awareness of wildlife entanglement, especially with inappropriately erected bird exclusion netting. RSPCA Qld rescues about 4000 individual wildlife each year from netting. Most are flying-foxes but birds and snakes can also become entangled.

**NEVER** buy the thin nylon netting sold by most hardware stores.

It is cruel and deadly and is responsible for the deaths of thousands of flying-foxes and other wildlife annually. **Thrown loosely over a tree**, it has the potential to cause horrific injuries. We are advising people who unintentionally catch wildlife in this type of netting, to return the netting to the place of purchase, request a refund and demand a safer alternative.

**Flying-foxes are protected wildlife and it is illegal to harm them in netting.**

Flying-foxes have evolved a special relationship with our Australian forests by keeping them diverse and viable through pollination and seed dispersal. Our forests are the lungs and the rainmakers of the planet and flying-foxes are pivotal to their health and longevity. Both Grey-headed and Spectacled Flying-foxes are listed as vulnerable to extinction under the Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act. It is vital that we minimize the risk of harm. We must work together to remove unsafe netting from the market place and refuse to buy it from major hardware stores as it is responsible for the deaths of protected species all over Australia.

**NEVER try to free a flying-fox from netting yourself.** Less than 0.05% of flying-foxes may have Australian Bat Lyssavirus. **However, only vaccinated wildlife carers should ever handle bats or flying-foxes** as they have the necessary skills to free the animal and determine whether it needs veterinary attention. **Always seek professional help.** Due to the injuries that netting causes, bats must **never** be set free immediately. They must be kept in care for a period of time to prevent them from dying of injuries that may not appear until days later. **Please be humane – call for help as netting is a killer!**

*Fruiting season coincides with flying-fox birthing season. Females with young are more likely to be caught in netting as they search for food.*

*When mothers are kept in care to recover from their injuries, their babies die slowly from starvation and exposure back in the colony.*



**Baby also caught with mother**

## ✓ SHADE CLOTH



This shade cloth like product has proven to be effective with no harm to wildlife including bats. Approximately 15-18% shade, it will not affect the ripening or quality of fruit produced. The product comes in 6m widths and will not fray when cut. An added benefit is that it may assist in reducing the problem of fruit fly. Lay it gently over the entire tree and close it off at the bottom. It can be zip tied to a frame or cut it and fold it over fruiting branches. Make sure it is pegged to the ground as flying-foxes are smart and will climb up inside. As it is UV stabilized, it will last much longer than other cheap alternatives. It can be folded and put away after use. Buy it from **BUNNINGS** stores as a prepackaged product or off 6 meter wide rolls from **Fernland Agencies**. They will post it anywhere in Australia. Call: 07 5441 1711 Fax 07 5441 6791 Email [sales@fernland.com.au](mailto:sales@fernland.com.au)

## ✓ FRUIT BAGS



A wildlife friendly deterrent is to attach exclusion bags over the fruit you can reach and the unreachable fruit can then be left for wildlife. The advantage of using these bags, are that they stop fruit fly and insect pests from damaging your fruit. You can therefore enjoy a greater yield. Call Green Harvest on toll free 1800 681014 or order online [www.greenharvest.com.au](http://www.greenharvest.com.au)

## ✓ FRUIT SAVER NETS



A box shaped net covering 11 sq meters this is the perfect solution for large fruit trees such as figs and mangoes. An optional frame can be made from PVC pipe, metal or timber to support the net away from the tree. There is an opening for easy access for pruning and picking fruit. [www.fruittreenets.info](http://www.fruittreenets.info)

## ✓ PLASTIC GARDEN POT



This alternative can be used on large fruit such as paw paws and mangoes. It's easy to do and it's cheap and affordable. Find an appropriately sized plastic garden pot to cover your fruit. Using secateurs, cut up the side of the pot and make a central hole the size of the fruits' stem in the base of the pot. Then stretch the pot over the fruit like a bell. Wildlife cannot reach underneath and the fruit will continue to ripen.

# Make a Donation



## Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld Inc.

PO Box 1727, Capalaba, Qld., 4157.

[www.bats.org.au](http://www.bats.org.au) [info@bats.org.au](mailto:info@bats.org.au) ABN: 997 897 062 17

We are a registered Environmental Organization and as such, rely on the good will of the public to help finance our important service. **WE NEED YOUR HELP.** Donations of \$2 and over are Tax Deductable.

Give Now Donation page: <http://www.givenow.com.au/bats>;

Direct deposit: Bat Conservation Fund, Westpac Bank: BSB 034070, Acc 427443