



# Media release

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15 September 2020

## **Biosecurity Blitz 2020 challenge: 19 October – 16 November**

[Biosecurity Blitz 2020](#) has been enhanced with a 30 day challenge to bolster community surveillance and help protect Western Australia's important agriculture and fisheries industries from exotic pests, weeds and diseases.

It is the sixth year the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has hosted the annual Biosecurity Blitz campaign, which will run from 19 October to 16 November.

Department development officer Laura Fagan said the 2020 program included a number of initiatives to encourage people to survey their local area and find out what biosecurity threats could be lurking in their backyard.

"The 30 day challenge features a series of activities across a different theme for each week, which provides opportunities to explore and discover habitats, plant species, insects and soil organisms that live nearby," she said.

"Those that sign up and complete the challenge and achieve 'boffin status' will win a unique biosecurity prize, sponsored by Plant Surveillance Network Australasia Pacific."

The annual School Challenge also provides an opportunity for teachers and students to get out of the classroom to undertake surveillance and learn more about the importance of biosecurity.

Ms Fagan said the community played an important role on the front line of surveillance in the State's biosecurity defence system.

"Early detection is imperative to identify the presence of a biosecurity threat that could cost our valuable agriculture industry in terms of lost production and control costs, as well as affect the environment and our outdoor lifestyle," she said.

"Surveillance is also important to demonstrate the absence and presence of biosecurity threats, to support access to interstate and overseas markets."

The reports from the Biosecurity Blitz will complement the department's ongoing surveillance efforts and other activities to protect WA from the threat of exotic pests and diseases.

DPIRD is currently engaged in a number of biosecurity responses in WA, including Queensland fruit fly, red imported fire ants, browsing ants and Fall armyworm.

"These responses highlight the importance of surveillance and government, industry and community collaboration to ensure our biosecurity defences are effective and robust," Ms Fagan said.

"This imperative has been further highlighted this year as part of the International Year of Plant Health 2020, which has the theme 'Protecting Plants, Protecting Life'."

People interested in participating in the [Biosecurity Blitz 2020 30 Day Challenge](#) or the [School Challenge](#) are urged to sign up via the department's webpage [agric.wa.gov.au/biosecurity-blitz](http://agric.wa.gov.au/biosecurity-blitz) at any time before or during the program.

Download the department's free [MyPestGuide™ Reporter](#) app to upload observations or make a report via the [Biosecurity Blitz webpages](#).

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Images submitted will be analysed by department's diagnostic experts who will send a response as to what the specimen is and whether it is a biosecurity threat.

**Picture caption:** *Twins Otis (left) and Henry Bryant, 9, with sister Miri, 4, are participating in the Biosecurity Blitz 2020 30 Day Challenge with their parents.*

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