

Netting is a popular way to protect homegrown fruit, but some types of netting can entangle animals such as birds, flying-foxes and possums, often leading to their death.

Appropriate sized netting keeps wildlife safer.



What is the new regulation?

From 1 September 2021, netting used to protect household fruiting plants must have a mesh size of 5mm x 5mm or less at full stretch.

The regulation applies only to netting used to protect household fruiting plants.

What do you need to do?

- Remove netting that does not meet the new regulations before 1 September 2021.
- Dispose of old netting safely by placing it into a strong biodegradable bag before putting into landfill.
- Use only netting that has a mesh size of 5mm x 5mm or less at full stretch to comply with the new regulation.

The use of netting with a mesh size greater than 5mm x 5mm can result in a fine under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2019.

Fines also apply to anyone advertising or offering for sale the wrong sized netting to protect household fruiting plants.

What does 'household' mean?

Generally, 'household' fruit-trees, vegetable gardens, or other fruiting plants are those grown:

- at a residential premises in an urban or suburban area
- at a residential premises in a semi-rural or rural area, primarily for personal use (even if some excess produce is shared or sold).



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Tips for safer netting

It can be easier to protect selected branches rather than netting the whole tree. A range of bags, sleeves and socks are available to protect fruit on individual branches.

When netting the whole tree:

- Don't throw netting loosely over trees or allow netting to lie on the ground, where it can entangle reptiles and other animals
- Fix netting tightly to the tree trunk – this will stop wildlife, birds and rodents from reaching fruit.

What about netting on a frame?

Netting applied to a frame, rather than directly on a tree, is also subject to the regulations. The netting must have a mesh size of 5mm x 5mm or less at full stretch.



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