

# Wanted — Raspberry & Blackberry growers!

Michele Buntain & Dr Stephen Quarrell, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture  
Greg Lefoe, Agriculture Victoria

'RB21000: Integrated pest management approaches to address pest challenges in raspberry and blackberry' has been funded by Hort Innovation, using the raspberry and blackberry research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government.

The new five-year Rubus Integrated Pest Management program needs you! This research program aims to help growers manage and prevent pest outbreaks by using improved and potentially new integrated pest management (IPM) tools and strategies.



**Biological control research lead, Greg Lefoe.**

Photo credit: Agriculture Victoria

The first stage is ready to roll and involves gathering information from growers about their crops. Project lead, Dr Steve Quarrell, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA), says getting good baseline information is crucial.

“We know from past experience that understanding how growers currently manage pests, and learning about the environment around their crop, helps us develop practical strategies that work.

With redberry mite in blackberries, we found our talks with growers about their pest management program helped us to step back and see the big picture. We were then able to tweak the pesticide program allowing redberry mite predators to better establish in the crop. Our chats with growers also revealed that redberry mite was hiding out in wild blackberries close to many crops and this was a source of reinfestation, but also of potential predators,” he said.

In addition to the grower survey, there will also be an ongoing crop survey.

The hunt for new biological control agents for Rubus pest management will start with an on-ground survey of Rubus crops and their surrounds. This physical scan of both pests and predators is a great way for growers to get a little more information about what's living in and around their crops.

Agriculture Victoria entomologist Greg Lefoe leads the program's biological control research and is excited to uncover the potential of new and untested natural enemies. One example is the parasitoid, *Trichopoda giacomellii*. This little parasitic fly was originally released by CSIRO scientists in Northern NSW for green vegetable bug control, but its current distribution is not known.



**Dr Steve Quarrell inspecting a blackberry crop for predators.** Photo credit: Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture



**Brown lacewing larvae feed on eggs and soft bodied insects like aphids and whitefly.** Photo credit: Denis Crawford



**Orius 'Pirate Bug' and thrip predator.** Photo credit: Denis Crawford

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**In addition to this, we also want to understand how well commercially available predators control emerging pests such as broad mite and raspberry leaf and bud mite, and if there could be natural endemic enemies of these pests, Mr Lefoe said.**

**The team are calling on all raspberry and blackberry growers to register for both the grower and crop survey.**

We would love to hear from you!  
You can express interest by contacting:

**Berries Australia Rubus IDO: Mark Salter**

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