

**One More New Disease in California:  
Huanglongbing (HLB) also known as Citrus Greening**

*Ask Laura, Steve Tjosvold  
May 2012*

Question:

What is the latest new invasive pest or disease that we should be on the lookout for?

Answer:

On March 30, 2012 officials confirmed the State's first detection of the citrus disease known as huanglongbing (HLB), also known as citrus greening. The disease was detected in an Asian citrus psyllid sample—a tiny aphid-like insect-- and plant material taken from a lemon/pummelo tree in a residential neighborhood in the Hacienda Heights area of Los Angeles County.

HLB is a bacterial disease that develops in the vascular system of host plants. The Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) (Figure 1) can spread the bacteria as the pest feeds on citrus trees and some other citrus-related plants. Once a tree is infected, there is no cure, and it typically declines and dies within a few years. HLB is the most devastating disease of citrus in the world and is a threat to California's \$1.8 billion citrus industry.

Huanglongbing is known to be present in Mexico and in parts of the southern United States. Florida first detected the pest in 1998 and the disease in 2005, and the two have now been detected in all 30 citrus-producing counties in that state. The University of Florida estimates the disease has tallied more than 6,600 lost jobs, \$1.3 billion in lost revenue to growers and \$3.6 billion in lost economic activity. The pest and the disease are also present in Texas, Louisiana, Georgia and South Carolina. The states of Arizona, Mississippi and Alabama have detected the pest but not the disease.

Question:

What is being done about this?

Answer:

A 93-square mile quarantine is in place in the Hacienda Heights section of Los Angeles County. This area is part of a much larger quarantine already in place for the Asian citrus psyllid. The new quarantine will prohibit the movement of all nursery stock out of the area, while maintaining existing provisions allowing the movement of only commercially cleaned and packed citrus fruit. Any fruit that is not commercially cleaned and packed, including residential citrus, must not be removed from the property on which it is grown, although it may be processed and/or consumed on the premises.

What should be done locally?

Let's be clear, the citrus psyllid and the associated HLB disease have not been found in Santa Cruz County or any nearby counties. However, the psyllid and/or bacteria could be transported here on imported host plants or plant parts used in propagation. The psyllid feeds on all varieties of citrus (e.g. oranges, grapefruit, lemons, and mandarins) and a few very closely related ornamental plants in the family Rutaceae (e.g. calamondin, box orange, Indian curry leaf, and orange jessamine or orange jasmine). Buy only certified disease-free trees from a reputable nursery. Learn to recognize the pest and disease symptoms, and report your findings to County Agricultural Commissioner or CDFA officials.

Question:

Where can I get more information?

Answer: See the UC Davis IPM website

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74155.html> and CDFA website

<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/acp/>



**Figure 1 Asian citrus psyllid adult feeding. A aphid-like insect that transmits the bacteria that causes huanglongbing (HLB) disease on citrus, Photo credit: M.E. Rogers.**