



Huanglongbing Detection Threatens Orange County's Citrus Heritage

Orange County, whose name reflects a storied history of growing citrus fruit in California, is now partially under quarantine due to the detection of [Huanglongbing, a fatal citrus tree disease](#), also known as HLB or citrus greening disease. The quarantine means no citrus plants can be sold within the area, and no citrus plants or plant cuttings can leave the [quarantine area](#).

The California Department of Food and Agriculture detected Huanglongbing in an orange and a mandarin tree in a residential area of Cerritos on Dec. 29. Earlier that month Asian citrus psyllids, an insect that can spread the disease from tree to tree as it feeds, were collected from a nearby property and tested positive for the bacteria that causes HLB. This signaled a need for increased surveying and agriculture officials quickly set to work to identify any infected trees in the area.

While development has replaced the expansive orange farms the county was famous for in the early 1900s, orange trees are still a beloved part of Southern California and researchers estimate at least half of the region's homes have a citrus tree on the property. This heritage is at risk of disappearing due to the fatal and incurable HLB disease.

HLB is not harmful to humans or animals, but it kills citrus trees. There is no cure for the disease and once infected, trees must be removed to prevent the disease from spreading in the community. The infected citrus tree in Cerritos was removed and all citrus trees within a 800-meter area were treated to protect against Asian citrus psyllids. While researchers are looking for a cure to HLB, right now the best way to [protect against the disease](#) is to stop the pest that can infect citrus trees.

The Citrus Pest & Disease Prevention Program recommends the following actions:

- Do not transport citrus trees out of your local area. Only purchase citrus trees from local, reputable nurseries, and never bring citrus trees or plant cuttings into California from other states or countries.
- Cooperate with agriculture officials working throughout the state to stop the pest and disease.
- Inspect citrus trees regularly for signs of the Asian citrus psyllid and HLB. Report symptoms by calling 800-491-1899 and requesting a free inspection by trained agriculture officials.

HLB has been detected in more than 30 citrus trees in California, all in Los Angeles County. California residents, farmers and agriculture officials must work together to protect the state's iconic trees.