

Contact:
Sarah Bowles
Nuffer, Smith, Tucker
619/296-0605, ext. 254
sb@nstpr.com



**CITRUS TREE OWNERS CAUTIONED AGAINST SPREADING DEADLY PEST AND DISEASE
DURING SUMMER TRAVEL SEASON**

Quarantines Restrict Movement of Citrus in Key Areas of California

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – May 1, 2018 – Due to the threat posed by the Asian citrus psyllid and Huanglongbing, citrus tree owners are being urged to limit the spread of the pest and disease during summer travel season by obeying quarantine restrictions and taking extra caution when gifting citrus fruit from backyard trees.

The Asian citrus psyllid, a pest that feeds on citrus leaves, can spread a fatal and incurable citrus disease called Huanglongbing, also known as HLB or citrus greening disease. While not harmful to humans or animals, there is no cure for HLB and infected trees will die. Both the pest and disease have been found in the state of California and citrus tree owners should be on high alert.

Transporting citrus fruit with leaves still attached can inadvertently spread the pest. Quarantines are in place throughout the state that limit the transport of citrus across state and international lines, and between areas where the psyllid and disease have been found. More than 500 square miles within Southern California are currently under an HLB quarantine in numerous communities of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

“To limit the spread of the pest and disease, we urge residents not to transport their citrus in and out of quarantine zones, bordering counties, state lines or international borders,” said Nick Condos, interim director of the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program. “It is estimated that more than half of California residences have a citrus tree on their property and it’s crucial that we work together to ensure fresh, California citrus continues to grow healthy in our backyards.”

Tree owners may choose to share fruit with friends and family within their quarantine area. CPDPP recommends all leaves be removed and fruit washed thoroughly before removing it from the property. This prevents the psyllids or leaves infected with Huanglongbing from spreading to new areas.

All California residents are encouraged to inspect trees for psyllids and HLB whenever watering, spraying, pruning or tending to trees. The pest is one-eighth of an inch long and feeds at a 45-degree angle, making the insect appear thorn-like on leaves and stems. Symptoms of HLB include blotchy, yellow leaves; deformed fruit that doesn’t

ripen; and excessive fruit drop. **Residents should report pest or disease symptoms to the free California Department of Food and Agriculture Pest Hotline by calling 1-800-491-1899.**

Commercially grown California citrus is a \$3.2 billion industry and supports over 22,000 jobs – all of which could be lost if HLB is not stopped. Pest and disease management is crucial to protect not only your own tree but also your neighbors' trees and the state's citrus production. By working together to identify and act against the devastating disease, we can protect California's citrus.

For more information on Asian citrus psyllid and Huanglongbing prevention, visit CaliforniaCitrusThreat.org.

About the Citrus Pest & Disease Prevention Program

The Citrus Pest & Disease Prevention Program was established in 2010 to advise the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture and agricultural industry about efforts to combat serious citrus pests and diseases - like the Asian citrus psyllid and Huanglongbing - that threaten California's citrus trees. To learn more, visit CaliforniaCitrusThreat.org.

###