UC asks all Californians to inspect citrus trees for Asian Citrus Psylllid

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- *Downloadable pictures and video B-roll are available on the UC ANR News Website.*
- *A new four-minute video on the Asian citrus psyllid/huanglongbing crisis is available on YouTube. Please feel free to stream on social media or websites.*
- *At the end of the release is contact information for UC Cooperative Extension advisors and specialists available to provide commentary and more information on the Asian citrus psyllid and huanglongbing disease.*

Spring in California is time to inspect citrus trees for Asian citrus psyllid

A tell-tale sign of spring in California is a flush of new leaf growth on citrus trees. Because the feathery light green leaves are particularly attractive to Asian citrus psyllids (ACP), the leaves' emergence marks a critical time to determine whether the pest has infested trees.

"We encourage home citrus growers and farmers to go out with a magnifying glass or hand lens and look closely at the new growth," said Beth Grafton-Cardwell, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) citrus entomologist. "Look for the various stages of the psyllid – small yellow eggs, sesame-seed sized yellow ACP young with curly white tubules, or aphid-like adults that perch with their hind quarters angled up."

Pictures of the Asian citrus psyllids and its life stages are on the UC ANR website at http://ucanr.edu/acp. If you find signs of the insect, call the California Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Exotic Pest Hotline at (800) 491-1899.

Asian citrus psyllids are feared because they can spread huanglongbing (HLB) disease, an incurable condition that first causes yellow mottling on the leaves and later sour, misshapen fruit before killing the tree. ACP, native of Pakistan, Afghanistan and other tropical and subtropics regions of Asian, was first detected in California in 2008. Everywhere Asian citrus psyllids have appeared – including Florida and Texas – the pests have found and spread the disease. A few HLB-infected trees have been located in urban Los Angeles County. They were quickly removed by CDFA officials.

"In California, we are working hard to keep the population of ACP as low as possible until researchers can find a cure for the disease," Grafton-Cardwell said. "We need the help of citrus farmers and home gardeners."

Grafton-Cardwell has spearheaded the development of the UC ANR ACP website for citrus growers and citrus homeowners that provides help in finding the pest and what to do next. The site has an interactive map tool to locate residences and farms that are in areas where the psyllid has already become established, and areas where they are posing a risk to the citrus industry and must be aggressively treated by county officials.

The website outlines biological control efforts that are underway, and directions for insecticidal control, if it is needed. An online calculator on the website allows farmers and homeowners to determine their potential costs for using insecticides.

There are additional measures that can be taken to support the fight against ACP and HLB in California:

- When planting new citrus trees, only purchase the trees from reputable nurseries. Do not accept tree cuttings or budwood from friends or relatives.
- After pruning or cutting down a citrus tree, dry out the green waste or double bag it to make sure that live psyllids won't ride into another region on the foliage.
- Control ants in and near citrus trees with bait stations. Scientists have released natural enemies of ACP in Southern California to help keep the pest in check. However, ants will protect ACP from the natural enemies. Ants favor the presence of ACP because the psyllid produces honeydew, a food source for ants.
- Learn more about the Asian citrus psyllid and huanglongbing disease by reading the detailed pest note on UC ANR's Statewide Integrated Pest Management website.
- Assist in the control of ACP by supporting CDFA insecticide treatments of your citrus or treating the citrus yourself when psyllids are present.
- Support the removal of HLB-infected trees.