



Citrus Health Response Program Update April 2010

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Citrus Black Spot Identified in Collier County

During a routine survey requested by a grower in early March, an inspector from the FDACS Division of Plant Industry's Citrus Health Response Program (CHRP) identified a suspected infection of citrus black spot, *Guignardia citricarpa*, on Valencia oranges in a grove in Collier County.

Initial laboratory analyses by FDACS/DPI confirmed the citrus black spot finding, and subsequent testing by the USDA at their Beltsville, Maryland laboratory provided the final confirmation.

Federal and state agriculture officials have joined forces to address the challenges this new citrus disease presents. Highlights of efforts to date include:

- ✓ **Conducted delimiting surveys at 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7-mile arcs around the positive finds (see map on back)**
- ✓ **In addition to ongoing CHRP surveys, identifying other high-risk areas for survey**
- ✓ **Inspections of shipments received at packing houses and processing plants are also being conducted**
- ✓ **Because lemons are highly susceptible to citrus black spot, all lemon groves in Florida have been surveyed - no suspects have been identified**
- ✓ **Surveys of residential areas surrounding the area are also underway**
- ✓ **USDA APHIS has issued Emergency Action Notices (EAN) to five groves within the 1-mile arc around the initial detection area. EANs were also issued to the processing facilities that receive fruit from those groves. EANs specify the requirements for moving fruit, the decontamination treatment requirements for equipment, and how leaves and other plant debris remaining in trailers and field boxes are to be treated and destroyed**
- ✓ **A forensic investigation is underway in hope of determining the origin of the citrus black spot infection**
- ✓ **Next steps include the appointment of the CHRP Working Group to focus on citrus black spot regulations, research and outreach initiatives**

Citrus black spot has long been on the radar of Florida agricultural officials because of its capacity to blemish fruit and reduce yield. This find marks the first report of this fungal pathogen in North America, and constitutes a major jump in the geographical range of the pathogen. Until this suspected discovery, the nearest known infections were in Argentina and Brazil.

CHRP has been in place since 2006 and is designed to detect and mitigate the impact of serious citrus pests and diseases. The CHRP program has concentrated on grove survey and packinghouse inspections for citrus disease symptoms including citrus black spot, and, as a result inspects a large percentage of the Florida citrus crop annually. The isolated detection of citrus black spot, while unfortunate, is a good indicator of the effectiveness of the early detection network within the program.



Citrus black spot is a fungal disease marked by dark necrotic spots or blotches on the rinds of fruit, it produces early fruit drop, reduces crop yields, and if not controlled renders the highly-blemished fruit unmarketable.

While all commercial citrus cultivars are susceptible to CBS, the most vulnerable are lemon and late-maturing citrus varieties like Valencia followed by grapefruit.

Although disease symptoms are expressed clearest on fruit, the risk of spreading this disease through fruit movement is minimal.

The greatest risk of disease transmission lies in the inoculum of fallen, decomposing citrus leaves. Spores are discharged into the air during onset of warm, wet weather, mostly during late spring and summer.

CBS occurs in subtropical regions of the world with summer rainfall, and the disease has been found in Argentina, coastal areas of Australia, Brazil, China (mainland and Hong Kong), Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, areas of South Africa with summer rainfall, Swaziland, Taiwan, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.

Commercial and Abandoned Citrus Groves Near Citrus Black Spot Samples

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