



Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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INDUSTRY ADVISORY

**Citrus Greening Found in Polk County in Two Locations
including the State's Citrus Arboretum**

In late August, citrus greening disease (*huanglongbing*) was detected at the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services' Citrus Arboretum in Winter Haven. Additional samples collected from a commercial citrus grove in Fort Meade a few days later have also been confirmed positive. Polk County is the 26th county in which positive samples of citrus greening have been identified. Citrus greening was first found in Miami-Dade County in August 2005. The vector of the disease, the Asian citrus psyllid, was identified in Florida in 1998. Due to the widespread distribution of psyllids statewide, it was feared that it was only a matter of time before greening would be found in a growing number of additional counties.

The citrus greening find at the six-acre Florida Citrus Arboretum was found on a Dream navel orange tree (*Citrus sinensis*). After the sample was confirmed positive, the tree was destroyed. No other tree in the arboretum has been found positive. The arboretum is a collection of more than 250 cultivars of citrus, or citrus relatives. It was established in 1975 to ensure that valuable citrus and citrus-related germplasm are always available for study and use in Florida. Because it is such a valuable tool for research and education for horticultural study, germplasm source, and exhibition, protection of this treasured resource has always been a priority of the Department; and therefore, it is surveyed on a regular basis. A recent intensive survey revealed the diseased tree. Actions to preserve these valuable sources of germplasm are in place, including a recovery plan for any further disease identification or anything that could cause loss of trees in the arboretum, such as weather events. The recovery plan includes collecting additional budwood shoot tip grafts for propagation, more intensified surveying, increased insect control and other disease management measures.

Because of the amount of disease pressure in the citrus-producing counties of Florida, the Department has moved its budwood and germplasm facilities from Winter Haven and other locations in central and south Florida to north Florida. An 60,000-square-foot insect-proof facility has been completed in Levy County, and a second facility in Alachua County is the final stages of design. Citrus budwood that will be maintained for industry use at these facilities will be subject to an intense testing regime to assure it is pathogen free.

The Department's Florida Citrus Nursery Certification Program, designed to protect new citrus plantings, is

also well underway. Forty-six citrus nurseries that are in compliance with the new citrus nursery regulations have been registered with the state. These regulations require that all citrus nursery plants be grown in insect-proof structures. The need for citrus trees is high as the industry recovers from the loss of trees due to citrus canker, another bacterial disease, and citrus greening. For information on the citrus nursery registration program contact Justin Ezell at 863-298-7720.

The Citrus Health Response Program was developed to provide protection at every level of citrus production. Through the CHRP, state and federal agriculture officials, and the scientific and academic community continue to work with industry on how to best manage greening and other citrus diseases. The Department, in cooperation with UF/IFAS, has developed training materials to help the industry deal with the increased challenges of growing citrus. For more information, please visit www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi or call the Department's toll-free helpline number 800-282-5153.

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