



MVCB Weekly News

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www.mvcitrus.org.au

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Citrus
Board**

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Asian Citrus Psyllids (ACP) Found in California

Six Asian citrus psyllids have been found near Porterville, California. The latest interceptions were confirmed by the California Department of Agriculture, bringing the number of psyllids found in the county to nine. All the traps found with psyllids were placed in commercial orchards on June 11 and retrieved on June 25-26.

Kevin Severns with the Orange Cove/Sanger Citrus Association said the finds are significant and he would not be surprised to see officials put a full-fledged quarantine in place this time.

The discoveries of the dangerous pest came nearly a month to the day after officials had lifted restrictions that had been in place for six months after three psyllids were found in traps near Strathmore and Terra Bella. Those restrictions were much less invasive than a quarantine. The restrictions were in place for a 5-mile radius around the December 2012 discoveries, and fruit was allowed to be moved out of the area if the orchard had been treated. A quarantine could be up for a 20-mile radius around the finds.

This is serious to the citrus industry, not just to the crop, but to the tree," said Severns. He said he made a recent trip to Florida and was surprised by the damage to the citrus industry that he saw. He said production in Florida was off 10 percent this year alone.

California Department of Food and Agriculture has already begun to saturate the affected area with detection traps in order to determine the extent of any infestation. The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and CDFA will work collaboratively to determine what steps are taken next.

"Thanks to the responsiveness and cooperation of our farmers and their neighbours, we were able to do away with ACP restrictions in mid-June, so it is very disappointing to have new detections pop up so quickly," said Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner Marilyn Kinoshita.

To date, HLB has been detected on just one residential property in the Hacienda Heights neighbourhood of Los Angeles. *(Source: <http://www.recorderonline.com>)*

NOTE: Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP) is an exotic pest not found in Australia, however, it is on our doorstep as it has been detected in PNG and Indonesia. MVCB has produced a fridge magnet which has the ACP adult and nymphs pictured. This magnet which was handed out to growers at the recent MVCB/SCG technical field day and will help Murray Valley growers identify ACP if or when an incursion occurs. Any grower who did not attend the field day can pick up a magnet at the Board's Pine Avenue office or ring Tony Bothroyd on 0407325934.

Pruning Citrus

The aim of any form of pruning is to improve net returns to the grower. Pruning has a number of benefits;

- Improved tree vigor – better fruit size on younger fruiting wood
- Better light penetration – more fruit set within the canopy, improved fruit colour, quality and size
- Crop regulation/thinning effect – bigger fruit size, reduced alternate bearing
- Better spray penetration and air circulation – cleaner fruit, less pests and diseases
- Better access to inside the tree for harvesting and hand pruning
- Tree size control – easier picking, easier orchard access, less fruit blemish

- Better spray coverage
- Dead wood removal – cleaner fruit, less fruit damage, reduced sources of disease.

Dead wood removal is a must in all pruning styles as this reduces the chances of blemish on fruit from wind or disease. Most varieties can be pruned at any time of the year, however, certain times are more favourable than others. Grapefruit and Tangelos are more sensitive to sunburn and should not be heavily pruned during the hotter months. Navels and mandarins are best pruned after harvest and the last frost, but before flowering. Prune Valencias after harvest during a heavy cropping year. White-washing is recommended if pruning in the hotter months.

Window pruning involves taking out a selected section of the canopy which may involve a complete limb or several branches to create a window into the tree that allows more light penetration. The aim being to gradually rejuvenate the canopy in small sections on an annual basis. This style of hand pruning has the least initial impact on the tree, however, it will take a number of years to achieve an improved tree framework. A good pruning style when time and resources are limiting.

Open centre pruning is commonly used on citrus that have a strong upright growing habit and involves taking out the top centre piece of the tree to create a vase shape in the basic structure of the tree. About 6-8 main limbs remain to form the structure of the tree. The tree is then branch pruned to thin out the canopy.

Canopy thinning is the most commonly used style of hand pruning and involves the removal of branches around the tree to form an evenly distributed open canopy and limb structure. The first step is to remove major limbs to produce a tree that has about 6-8 evenly spaced scaffolding limbs. The next step is to thin out the outer canopy to evenly distribute light throughout the tree.

Skirting is the removal of the lower section of the tree canopy generally to a height of 0.5 to 1m. Skirting benefits include reduced marking of fruit, reduction of pathways for insects such as fullers rose weevil, ants, snails and tree hoppers, improved penetration of micro-sprinklers and improved herbicide spray coverage.

Whatever method of pruning you employ the benefits are a better return due to increased tree vigor and bigger fruit.

Avoid Picking Small Fruit for Better Returns

Poorly sized fruit (under 70mm) in the marketplace at oversupply levels only places pressure on the price of Class 1 fruit causing it to drop.

Growers are urged to consider size picking this year to earn better returns. Strip harvesting floods the market and results in poor returns, as packers cannot generate enough revenue to ensure a viable return back to growers.

Sizing rings are available at the Board's office in Pine Ave, for \$25.00