



COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

CITRUS CANCKER

Citrus canker has been discovered in the town of Rancho Viejo, located northwest of Brownsville, Texas, in Cameron County, a city park in Harris County, and in Richmond, located in Fort Bend County. TDA has quarantined the infested area. The agency is working in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Texas Citrus Pest and Disease Management Corporation (TCPDMC), Texas A&M University-Kingsville Citrus Center (TAMU-KCC), industry stakeholders and residents to slow the spread of this destructive pest.

Citrus canker is a bacterial disease that causes lesions on the leaves, stems and fruit of plants, including citrus and other plants in the citrus family. While not harmful to humans, the disease affects the health of infected citrus trees and marketability of the infected fruit. There is no cure for citrus canker.

Prevention is the best option to protect against citrus canker. The disease causes the citrus tree to continually decline in health and fruit production until the tree produces no fruit at all. Citrus canker is highly contagious and can be spread rapidly by:

- Wind-driven rain,
- Lawnmowers and other landscaping or farm equipment,
- People carrying the infection on their hands, clothing or equipment, and
- Moving infected or exposed plants or plant parts (fruit, leaves or stems).

SYMPTOMS

Citrus canker is mostly a leaf-spotting and fruit rind blemishing disease. However, when conditions are highly favorable for infection, it can cause defoliation, shoot dieback and fruit drop. Citrus canker symptoms include brown spots on leaves, which often have an oily or water-soaked appearance. These spots are technically called lesions, and you'll find they are usually surrounded by a yellow halo. Lesions can be found on both the upper and lower sides of the leaf. Similar symptoms can appear on fruit and stems.



Photo by Dan Robb, USDA



Also, Citrus Leafminer damage created by larvae that feeds on citrus plants by creating shallow tunnels or mines can expose more tissue to citrus canker infection and increases the infected areas. The photo below shows leafminer damage with citrus canker.



SPREAD AND MOVEMENT

Citrus canker is a highly contagious plant disease and spreads rapidly over short distances. Wind-driven rain and water splash are the primary means of spreading the disease within and between trees. Irrigation can increase the risk of disease spread. Contaminated tools and equipment, people and birds can spread citrus canker. The disease spreads across long distances through the movement of infected plants or plant parts, including nursery trees and propagation material (budwood, rootstock seedlings and budded trees). Hurricanes and severe weather events with strong winds and rain can spread citrus canker long distances. Citrus canker bacteria may survive for up to 10 months in lesions on living citrus plants. Trees can survive for long periods with diseased plant tissues, which cause the discoloration of the bark on citrus tree trunks and limbs, as well as in plant debris. **Citrus canker is harmless to humans and other animals.**

HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF CITRUS CANKER

If you think you see symptoms of the disease on citrus plants, **DO NOT TAKE SAMPLES** as moving samples can spread the disease.

Contact www.saveourcitrus.org, USDA or your local Texas A&M County Extension Office to report any suspect trees.

Check your citrus trees every two weeks for symptoms of both citrus canker disease and citrus greening disease.