

EXOTIC PESTS FACT SHEET 1

Citrus canker (*Xanthomonas axonopodis* pv. *citri*)

What is it?

Citrus canker is a bacterial disease caused by a bacterium and produces lesions on the above-ground parts of citrus trees. The bacteria infect young, actively growing parts of the plant through wounds and openings on leaves, stems, and fruit.

What does it look like?

Citrus canker causes lesions on leaves, stems, and fruit. It can cause premature fruit drop, defoliation, twig dieback and general tree decline leading to tree death in severe cases.

What should I look for?

- Lesions on fruit begin as pin-point tan coloured blemishes which expand into brown to grey spots approx. 2-10 mm in diameter and have a yellow halo. The edges of the lesions have a watery or oily appearance and become scabby with age.
- Lesions develop on both sides of the leaf and are raised and rough. These lesions can be seen or felt on both sides of the leaf.



Citrus canker infected fruit, stems and leaves.

Timothy Shubert, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services,
Bugwood.org

- Stems can also develop lesions that have a crusty, tan coloured appearance.

How does it spread?

- The bacteria is spread rapidly and widely by water such as wind-blown rain and overhead irrigation systems. Flooding and strong winds can spread the bacteria greater distances.
- The bacteria can also be spread by the movement of infected plant material, people and equipment.

Where is it present?

Citrus canker is found in large parts of Asia, parts of Africa, throughout the Americas, and some Pacific Islands but is not present in Europe. The disease is more obvious and severe in tropical and subtropical areas. Outbreaks of citrus canker have occurred in Australia where it has been eradicated from Queensland, and is currently under eradication in WA and NT.



Thick and spongy lesions of citrus canker.

Jeffrey W. Lotz, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services,
Bugwood.org



Why is it important?

The disease significantly reduces crop yields and fruit quality. Severe infection causes defoliation, dieback and severely blemished fruit leading to reduced fruit quality and premature fruit drop.

How can I protect my industry?

Check your citrus orchard frequently for the presence of new diseases and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with diseases common in your industry so you can recognise something different.

Where can I get more information?

For more information go to: www.citrus.co.nz



Lesions can be seen and felt on both sides of a leaf.

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If you see any unusual pests or plant symptoms, call MPI EXOTIC PEST AND DISEASE HOTLINE 0800 80 99 66