

# EXOTIC PESTS FACT SHEET 3

## Asian Citrus Psyllid (*Diaphorina citri*)

### What is it?

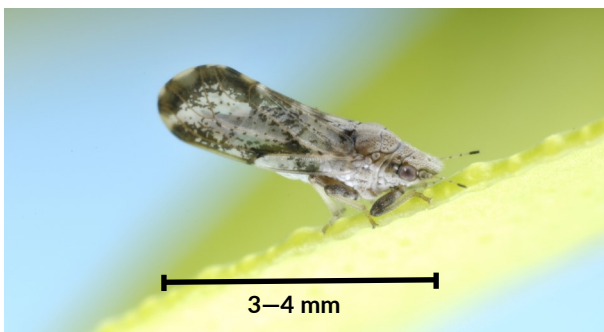
Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) affects all types of citrus. In addition to citrus, other hosts include *Murraya* species (curry leaf, orange jasmine) and other members of the *Rutaceae* family. ACP causes damage to the growing points of trees and can lead to dwarfing, defoliation and dieback, and affects fruit quality. ACP is also a vector for the bacterial disease Huanglongbing (HLB).

### What does it look like?

Adult psyllids are 3-4 mm in length, mottled brown-beige in colour, and resemble a small cicada. Psyllid nymphs are up to 2 mm long and yellowish-orange in colour with red eyes. Adult psyllids lay their eggs on growing shoots, in leaf crevices, or at the base of newly-formed leaf buds. Eggs are 0.3 mm long.

### What should I look for?

- Adult psyllids have a distinctive feeding stance where the head is lowered and the body is at a 45° angle to the leaf surface. Psyllids feed on the underside of leaves.
- Psyllid feeding causes severely curled leaves and deformed shoots. It causes young shoots to die and dramatically slows the growth of young trees. Heavy psyllid infestation can cause flower and fruitlet drop, and dieback.



Asian citrus psyllid adult.

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

- The psyllid excretes honeydew and a waxy substance which promotes the growth of sooty mould.
- Psyllid nymphs thrive on new vegetation. Psyllid populations are lower when plant growth is not active.
- Because the psyllid is a vector for HLB, symptoms of HLB may also be seen, such as leaf yellowing or chlorosis, and asymmetric development of leaves and fruit.

### How does it spread?

- Adult psyllids are known to move frequently between host plants searching for new growth. They can leap and may fly short distances. Wind currents can spread the psyllid over long distances.
- The movement of egg or nymph infested plant material can spread the psyllid over longer distances and between countries.

### Where is it present?

Asian citrus psyllid is a native of southern Asia in tropical and subtropical regions. It is now present throughout Asia, Middle East, East Africa, North, Central, and South America. In the Pacific, it is present in American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and Papua New Guinea. It has been present in the Northern Territory of Australia but was eradicated.



Asian citrus psyllid nymph.

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### Why is it important?

Psyllid infestation slows tree growth and leads to flower and fruitlet drop which reduces fruit yield and quality. The fruit lacks juice and taste, and is unsaleable. The psyllid is also a vector for HLB which also affects fruit quality and yield.

### 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](http://www.citrus.co.nz)  
Email: [info@citrus.co.nz](mailto:info@citrus.co.nz)



Asian citrus psyllid (nymphs and adults) on a plant. Waxy excretions on the stem are visible.

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