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### **What is Citrus Canker?**

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Citrus canker is a highly infectious bacterial disease that causes spotting on the leaf, fruit, and stems along with premature fruit and leaf drop. Windborne rain, animals, people, and moving infected plants or plant parts spread the disease. There is no known chemical that destroys citrus canker, and the current eradication program is destroying canker infected trees and any citrus trees that are within 1,900 feet of an infected tree. The eradication zone does not discriminate between residential and agricultural areas. This zone may seem large, but research has shown that about 95% of exposed trees that contracted citrus canker were up to 1,900 feet away from one diseased tree.

Since 1995, citrus canker has spread to many important citrus-producing counties within Florida. The state's \$8.5 billion citrus industry depends upon controlling canker, and residents are part of this effort by helping prevent backyard citrus trees from becoming infected.

- Learn what citrus canker looks like. Helpful sources are the UF/IUFAS Canker website (<http://canker.ifas.ufl.edu/index.asp>), the Florida Department of Agriculture's website (<http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/canker/>), and your local county extension service.
- If you suspect your citrus tree may be infected, DO NOT remove any part of the tree and transport it to another location. Promptly call the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) canker control task force office at (800) 282-5153. An inspector will be sent to look at the tree in question with your permission.

- If canker has been found in your neighborhood, have a “gardening uniform” that is only used when working in the landscape and not worn anywhere else. Wash the gardening clothes in the hot water cycle with laundry detergent immediately after working around citrus trees. Disinfect your hands by washing with soap and water, followed by washing them with a chlorine bleach disinfectant solution of approximately 1 ounce of bleach to 1 gallon of water.
- Clean any landscape tools that have come into contact with citrus trees by washing them and then dipping the tools in the following solution: 6 ounces of bleach to 1 gallon of water.
- Speak with your landscapers that prune citrus trees or work around them about using the above disinfection methods.

Some regions in Florida have been placed under quarantine by FDACS. These areas have rules that must be followed in order to avoid fines that may be assessed at a maximum civil penalty of \$5,000 per incident. The rules include not moving citrus trees, fruits, or plant parts from the quarantine area, not planting citrus trees within the area, and no potted citrus is allowed in the area unless in a registered nursery. To determine if you are in a quarantine zone, go to

<http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/canker/maps.html>

By following recommendations on working with or around citrus, residents can assist FDACS in controlling citrus canker. Not only are the chances decreased that your backyard citrus trees will become infected, but agricultural producers will appreciate your efforts. To learn more about citrus canker, please contact your local County Extension Service.