

Citrus Greening FAQs

Question: What is citrus greening?

Answer: Citrus greening, also called Huanglongbing (HLB), is a bacterial infection of citrus plants.

Question: What is the origin of citrus greening?

Answer: The bacteria that cause citrus greening - three species of *Liberibacter* - probably originated in Asia prior to 1900 and has slowly spread throughout many citrus growing areas.

Question: How is citrus greening spread in the United States?

Answer: The most common way that citrus greening is spread is by a tiny insect called the Asian citrus psyllid (*Diaphorina citri* Kuwayama). It can also be transmitted by grafting.

Question: Where is citrus greening in the United States?

Answer: The disease was first detected in Florida in 2005. By 2008, it had been identified in most of the citrus growing counties in the state. The disease also poses a threat to other U.S. citrus-growing areas, including California, Louisiana, Arizona, Alabama, and Texas.

Question: Why is citrus greening a problem?

Answer: Citrus greening has devastated millions of acres of citrus crops throughout the United States and abroad. In countries where the disease is endemic, citrus trees of susceptible cultivars like sweet orange begin to decline within three to four years after planting and have greatly reduced fruit crop and fruit quality. Infected trees produce fruits that are poorly colored, possibly lopsided, and bitter.

Question: What is the current treatment for citrus greening?

Answer: Currently, there are no known treatments or cure for citrus greening. Infected trees eventually die.

Question: Does citrus greening pose threats to people or animals?

Answer: Citrus greening does not pose health threats to people or animals.

Question: What is ARS doing about citrus greening?

Answer: Finding answers to fight the disease takes a coordinated effort among researchers, universities, government, and the citrus industry. ARS scientists are actively engaged with these partners to research all aspects of this disease problem, that includes the host, pathogen, and insect vector, with an aim to overcome the citrus greening and return citrus growing in Florida and the rest of the U.S. to high profitability.

Question: What is the ARS citrus breeding program?

Answer: The ARS citrus breeding program in Florida maintains a robust pipeline of selections poised to supplant the predominant orange juice cultivar and provide superior new fresh market varieties. The program has introduced four new scion breeding parents endowed with substantial HLB tolerance, and that provide a valuable resource for continuing cultivar development at ARS and in other breeding programs.

Sources:

[Coordinated Response to Citrus Greening Disease | USDA](#)

[Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#)

[National Invasive Species Information Center](#)