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Journal of Citrus Pathology

Title

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Journal

Journal of Citrus Pathology, 1(1)

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Publication Date

2014

DOI

10.5070/C411024180

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1.2

Response of Government and the Citrus Industry to the Discovery of Asian Citrus Psyllid in Arizona

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In October, 2009, about three months after the first find of Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP) in San Luis Rio Colorado Sonora, a colony of ACP was found just across the border in San Luis Arizona. Since then, twelve additional sites have been found in Arizona, all except two in Yuma County. Less than 50 individual ACP have been found since 2009 and all have been eradicated. No ACP found in Arizona has yet tested positive for HLB. As of now, much of southwest Arizona is under federal quarantine for ACP and trees and fruit that move out of the quarantine area require special treatment. The response of the Arizona Department of Agriculture to the discovery of ACP has been to increase trapping and eradication activities using funds received from the Federal and State Government. The University of Arizona and the citrus industry have responded by establishing screenhouses to produce trees that can provide disease-free budwood. The industry has also developed a plan to establish an area-wide spray program if eradication efforts are not successful. Extension and outreach efforts have been directed toward the industry and the homeowner. The location of ACP finds in Arizona suggests that both Mexican ACP populations near the border and the transport of citrus fruit from the interior of Mexico lead to the establishment of the insect in Arizona. The small numbers of ACP found in Arizona, in contrast with populations found in coastal California, suggest that ACP populations may be adversely affected by the arid climate of the region, and that timely detection and eradication efforts are the keys to controlling spread of the ACP in arid regions.