

Agricultural officials are cautioning Californians when traveling over fear that a dangerous pest and its subsequent disease will be spread in the coming summer months amid increased travel.

The Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) is a pest that feeds on citrus leaves and can spread Huanglongbing (HLB), the fatal and incurable citrus disease also known as citrus greening disease. While not harmful to humans or animals, there is no cure for HLB, and infected trees will die.

Traveling with citrus fruit or plant material can unknowingly spread the dangerous pest and plant disease, both of which have been found in California.

Officials are urging Californians to be mindful of the health of the state's citrus trees by obeying plant quarantine restrictions and taking extra precautions when gifting citrus fruit from backyard trees. Transporting citrus fruit with leaves still attached can inadvertently spread the pest to new areas of the state.

Quarantines are in place throughout California that limit the transport of citrus plant material across state and international lines, and between areas where the psyllid and disease have been found.

Portions of Southern California are currently under an HLB quarantine in numerous communities of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

"The best way to stop the spread of the disease is to stop the spread of the pest, which is why we urge residents not to transport their backyard citrus into and out of quarantine zones, bordering counties, state lines or international borders," said Victoria Hornbaker, director of the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division at the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

"Community support is critical to saving California citrus and residents must work together to ensure our iconic citrus crop can continue to bring joy to people across the state."

Tree owners may choose to share the fruit with friends and family within their quarantine area, however, state agricultural officials recommend all leaves and stems be removed and fruit washed thoroughly before moving it from the property. This prevents psyllids or leaves infected with HLB from being transported to new areas.

According to [AAA Travel](#), more than 37 million Americans will begin their summer months this Memorial Day weekend - a 60 percent increase from 2020.

All California residents are encouraged to inspect their trees for psyllids and HLB whenever tending to them. The pest is one-eighth of an inch long and feeds at a 45-degree angle, making the insect appear thorn-like on leaves and stems.

Symptoms of HLB include blotchy, yellow leaves; deformed fruit that doesn't ripen; and excessive fruit drop.

Residents should report pest or disease symptoms to the free California Department of Food and Agriculture Pest Hotline by calling 1-800-491-1899.