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NT declared free of Citrus canker

Local community and industry efforts to eradicate bacterial disease first detected in April 2018 deemed successful



The Northern Territory is officially free of Citrus canker, according to peak industry body, Citrus Australia. The announcement comes after [restrictions were lifted in March 2020](#).

The significant bacterial disease was [first detected in the Territory in April 2018](#). Soon after, it was confirmed the [disease had spread](#) across six sites, however Citrus Australia remained confident it would get on top of the disease.

Through a national cost-shared programme that ran from May 2018 to March 2021, the eradication programme was critical for protecting Australia's national citrus industry and international markets.

Nationally, the citrus industry is valued at A\$942m, with exports valued at around A\$508m, whilst the Australian nursery sector is valued at A\$2.6bn supplying nursery stock into citrus industry and retail supply chains.

During the course of the National Citrus Canker eradication programme, more

than 270 employees worked on the eradication project supporting all elements from operations encompassing community engagement, compliance, science, and planning.

Funding was provided from the Commonwealth Government, state and territory governments, and citrus and nursery industry partners, noting the disease had the potential to impact the national citrus industry through loss of trees, reduced fruit production, reputation risk lowering prices for fruit into market, with the potential for loss of important international markets if left unchecked.

Citrus Australia chief executive, Nathan Hancock, said it was a fantastic outcome for the citrus industry, adding: "[This result is] due in no small part to the commitment from the NT government, compliance by local citrus businesses including nurseries and farms and most importantly the support of the community.

"We must all continue to play our part to prevent the introduction of exotic pests

to Australia by not bringing plant material in to the country, even through the mail, but also as we begin to come out of Covid-19 international travel restrictions," added Hancock.

John McDonald, National Biosecurity manager Greenlife Australia, congratulated all involved in their superior efforts to contain the outbreak.

"Greenlife Industry Australia thanks and congratulates the Northern Territory plant biosecurity team, NT industry and community on the successful eradication of citrus canker.

"The rapid and structured response by NT plant biosecurity underpinned the success in eradicating this plant disease, in record time, from Australia," said McDonald.

In a release, Citrus Australia said the industry will begin on adjusting the biosecurity arrangements back to 'pre-citrus-canker' times.

This will be a transitional process over the coming weeks. Once completed, all movement requirements will be lifted.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/asiafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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