

February 5, 2020



Growing and Preserving Citrus

Summer Brasuel

UCCE Master Gardener and Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County

For February 5, 2020 publication

Are you jealous of your friends and family who can grow citrus in their area? Well, we can grow some varieties of citrus in some areas of El Dorado County, too. A little research is needed. Some varieties are more cold tolerant than others so be sure to check to see what the tolerance is for your variety. The most cold tolerant are mandarins, kumquats and hybrids such as lime-quats, and some oranges and lemons.

It is important to note that there is a devastating citrus disease and it can be easily transmitted into our county. The disease is most often spread by an insect, the Asian citrus psyllid. It has entered California and some counties in southern California have been quarantined. This psyllid has also been found in Sacramento and Placer counties. This disease can also be transmitted through cuttings.

It is important that we buy citrus trees only from certified nurseries, not big box stores! We also recommend that we do not transport fruit from other counties in case the Asian Citrus Psyllid is on the fruit. This tiny insect, no bigger than a grain of rice, may go unnoticed on your citrus trees or fruit, but it could have devastating consequences for the California citrus industry if not stopped. The Asian citrus psyllid feeds on citrus leaves and stems, and can infect citrus trees with a bacteria that causes a serious plant disease called Huanglongbing, also known as HLB or citrus greening disease. While not harmful to humans, the disease kills citrus trees and has **no cure**. The Florida citrus industry has been hard hit by the citrus-greening disease.

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The best way to protect citrus trees from HLB is to stop the Asian citrus psyllid. Once a tree is infected with HLB, it will die. Diseased trees need to be removed in order to protect other citrus trees on the property, neighbors' trees and the community's citrus. See pictures and infected areas within California here: <http://californiacitrusthreat.org/pest-disease>.

For those that have a healthy crop of citrus, there are many ways to preserve that bounty. Marmalade is a common favorite, but there are a lot of other fun ways to preserve your citrus fruit. Citrus flavored salts, candied citrus peel, lemon curd; frozen or canned, or oranges preserved in Cointreau are a few great ideas.

On Wednesday, February 12, 2020 UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County will team up with the Master Food Preservers for a combo class about citrus. The Master Gardener presentation will provide information on the varieties of citrus that grow best in our county, how to care for them, and you will learn about the most common pests and diseases that affect citrus trees. The Master Food Preservers will have a preserving demonstration, including how to make citrus salts. We have many great ideas for preserving your citrus fruit.

For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu> . Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512, or send us an email using the Ask a Master Gardener option on our website. Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. We also encourage you to visit us at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, located at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville, behind Folsom Lake College, El Dorado Center. See http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Demonstration_Garden/ for more information and days and hours of operation, or call us to schedule a tour. To sign up for newsletters http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master_Gardeners/Newsletters_and_Event_Updates/. Master Gardeners are also on Facebook and Instagram; we hope you enjoy our postings and will share them with your friends.

UCCE Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message at (530) 621-5506 or email us at edmfp@ucanr.edu. For more information about our program and events, visit our website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmfp>. Sign up to receive our E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter.