



Greenlife Industry Australia

# YOUR LEVY @ WORK

Monday, 12 April 2021

## Citrus canker eradicated

Citrus canker, a significant bacterial disease of citrus plants that was detected in the Territory in April 2018, has now been eradicated thanks to the support of the local community and industry.

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

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

During the course of the National Citrus Canker Eradication Program, more than 270 employees worked on the eradication project supporting all elements from operations through to 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, and lowered prices of fruit into international markets, with the potential for loss of important international trade markets if left unchecked.

The community should be acknowledged for their role in supporting the eradication efforts with 6,192 host plants removed from properties and nurseries across Darwin and Katherine.

After a significant effort over a prolonged period of time, the Territory is now free of citrus canker.

This means that nationally, industry will continue to access important international markets and locally, our growers will be able to move plants and plant-related products interstate without additional treatments or inspections being required. This is important for ensuring our growers remain competitive and profitable.

### Fast facts

- 15,000 host plants were surveyed in the NT
- 32 positive samples were identified
- 6,192 host plants were removed from properties and nurseries across Darwin and Katherine
- The department followed strict procedures and protocols to prevent the spread of citrus canker through contamination of people, plants and vehicles.
- 270 employees worked on the project
- Locals played a big part in eradicating Citrus canker from the Territory

Proof of Freedom was signed by the National Management Group on 8 April 2021.

Work will now 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.

The National Citrus Canker Eradication Program has run over three years with an action plan outlining: community engagement, compliance, movement controls, treatment, tracing, surveillance, epidemiology, diagnostics and science and recovery.

### Quotes from Shaun Drabsch, Chief Executive Officer, Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade

"The Northern Territory has been declared citrus canker free.

"The department would like to thank industry and the community for their support in the successful eradication of citrus canker.

**Hort  
Innovation**  
Strategic levy investment

**NURSERY  
FUND**

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit [horticulture.com.au](http://horticulture.com.au)



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“Without the community’s assistance, it would not have been possible for us to successfully eradicate citrus canker and to continue to protect our local and national industry and associated markets.

“Preventing the establishment of pests and diseases in the Territory is critical for protecting industry and ensuring we continue to grow our horticultural sector. We will continue to work with our industry partners and the community to raise awareness, promote good biosecurity practices, and respond quickly and effectively to any risks.

“We have seen positive public participation in biosecurity programs, which is vital for disease and pest elimination.

“I congratulate everyone that has played a role in the eradication of citrus canker.”

## **Quotes from Paul Burke, Chief Executive Officer, NT Farmers**

“NT Farmers have been involved in the citrus canker response from the beginning and have been impressed by the dedication and compassion shown by the citrus canker team.

“With the announcement of Proof of Freedom this will be welcomed by industry and will allow all citrus growers to get back to what they do best, growing high quality fruit. NT Growers have been very patient and have actively engaged in the process.”

## **Quotes from Nathan Hancock, Chief Executive Officer, Citrus Australia**

“This is a fantastic outcome for the citrus industry, 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.

“As a party to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed the citrus industry’s growers will bear a large cost for this response, but not as large as the impact of canker becoming endemic.

“We thank the dedicated staff at the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade who have managed to contain and eradicate citrus canker in the Northern Territory.”

## **Quotes from John McDonald, National Biosecurity Manager Greenlife Australia**

“Greenlife Industry Australia thanks and congratulates the Northern Territory plant biosecurity team, NT plant industries and the 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.”

“As an industry partner under the nationally cost shared response, our affected growers received reimbursement costs for business losses incurred due to participating in the eradication program thereby ensuring none were worse off under the response. These reimbursements included the cost of destroyed trees as well as the lost income from sales not made due to the ban on growing and selling citrus nursery stock”.

“Plant biosecurity is critical to the ongoing success of our food, fibre and foliage plant sectors across Australia with biosecurity being everyone’s responsibility and obligation. With the exposure to plant biosecurity risks increasing, it is important that industry recognise the need to take extra risk mitigation measures at a business level because doing nothing will lead to significant impacts on trade and market access”

**Media Contact: Samuel Cox,**  
[Samuel.cox@coxinall.com.au](mailto:Samuel.cox@coxinall.com.au)