

National Citrus Canker Eradication Program

NT Industry Update

Edition 1 – July 2019

Northern Territory Citrus Canker Eradication Program

Citrus canker was confirmed in the Northern Territory (NT) on 13 April 2018. To manage eradication of the disease a Control Centre was established and is currently operating from East Arm. An eradication program team has been undertaking tracing, surveillance, removal and compliance activities as well as community and industry engagement, planning and program management.

The Program works closely with industry groups to support growers and businesses affected by the incursion.

Surveillance and removal activities

Restricted areas

There are 13 restricted areas (RAs) in the Northern Territory (NT). An RA constitutes the 600m radius around an infected plant. Collectively there are 3,939 properties within the RAs including residences and businesses. To date, 96% of surveillance has been completed.

Based on data collected through surveillance activities, 1,459 properties have been identified as having host plants.

Removal activities to date have resulted in the removal of 4,068 host plants. Of the properties with host plants 91% have been cleared.

The first round of regrowth surveillance has commenced in RAs. This surveillance checks for signs of host plant regrowth on stumps and in the ground to ensure no citrus canker is present.

A total of 825 (66%) of properties have undergone regrowth surveillance. Of those surveyed, 8% of stumps showed signs of

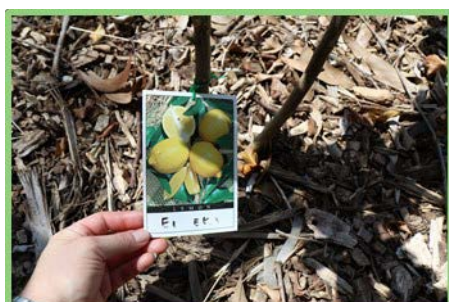
regrowth, however no citrus canker was detected.

Maps of the RAs in Darwin and Katherine are illustrated on the following page.



Photos:
 Right — Surveillance of a trace plant.
 Below from left — label of at-risk plant, removal activity, capping a stump for later regrowth surveillance.

RA's	Total number of properties	% Surveillance complete	% Properties cleared of host plants	Total number host plants removed	% First round regrowth surveillance
13	3939	96%	91%	4068	80%



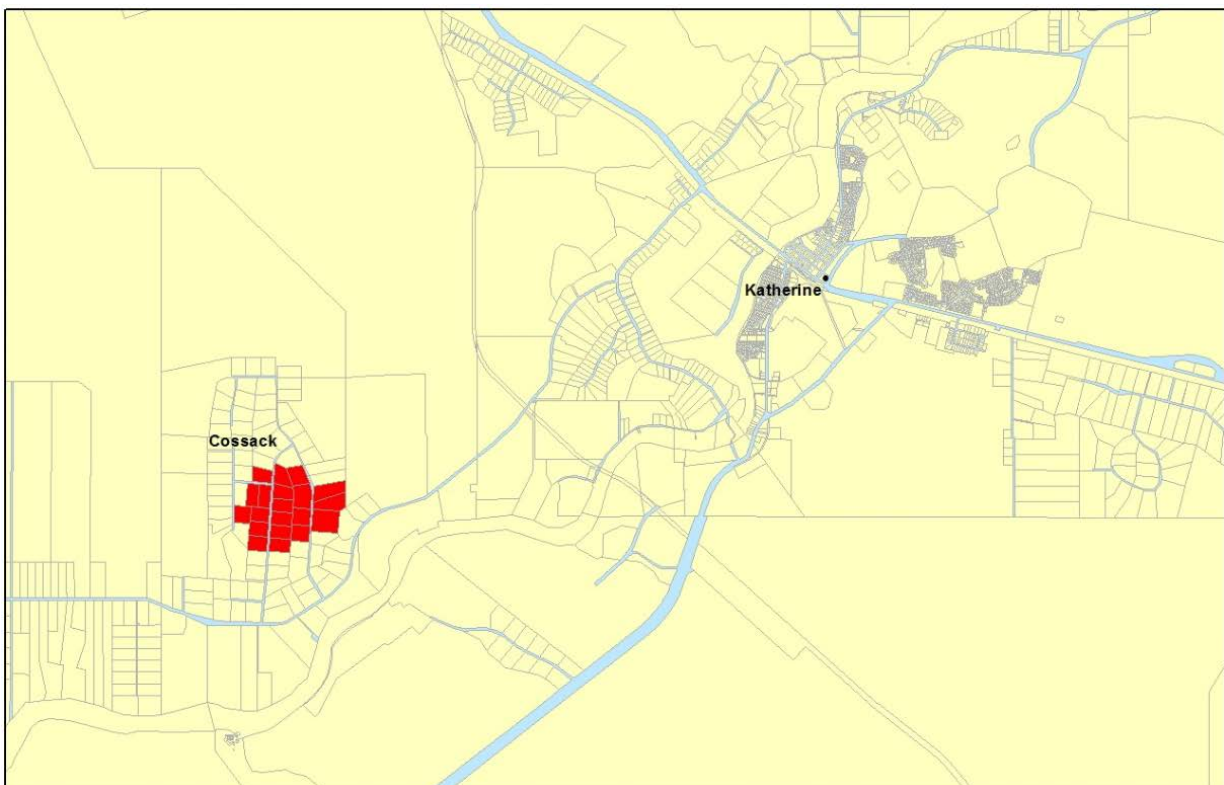
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Darwin Region Restricted Areas



Katherine Region Restricted Area



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Areas of interest

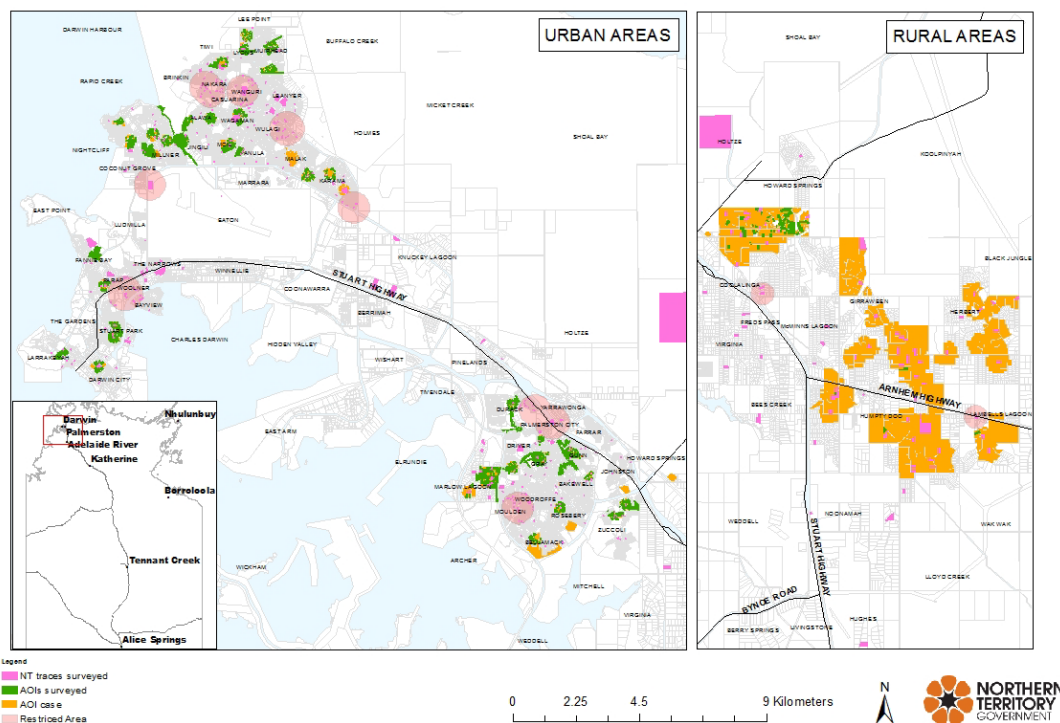
A total of 43 areas of interest (AOIs) have been selected across 29 suburbs in the greater Darwin regional area. Surveillance in AOIs is a key strategy for locating trace and at-risk plants.

AOIs were identified using a range of criteria including the number of nearby trace premises, the presence of community gardens, proximity to local

markets, the number and type of schools present, and community demographics.

Surveillance commenced in AOIs in May 2019. To date, surveillance in 23 suburbs has been completed, with 1,429 residences and businesses involved, with 1383 citrus canker host plants.

Area of interest (AOI) premises in the greater Darwin area



Compliance

A total of 161 cases where residents initially refused access to properties have been resolved informally to date.

Formal powers of entry were enacted at 20 properties under the NT *Plant Health Act 2008* to enable surveillance and removals to take place.

Any communication with non-compliant residents is considered a positive step, as this provides an opportunity to engage with residents in regards to the program and legislative requirements.

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Tracing activities

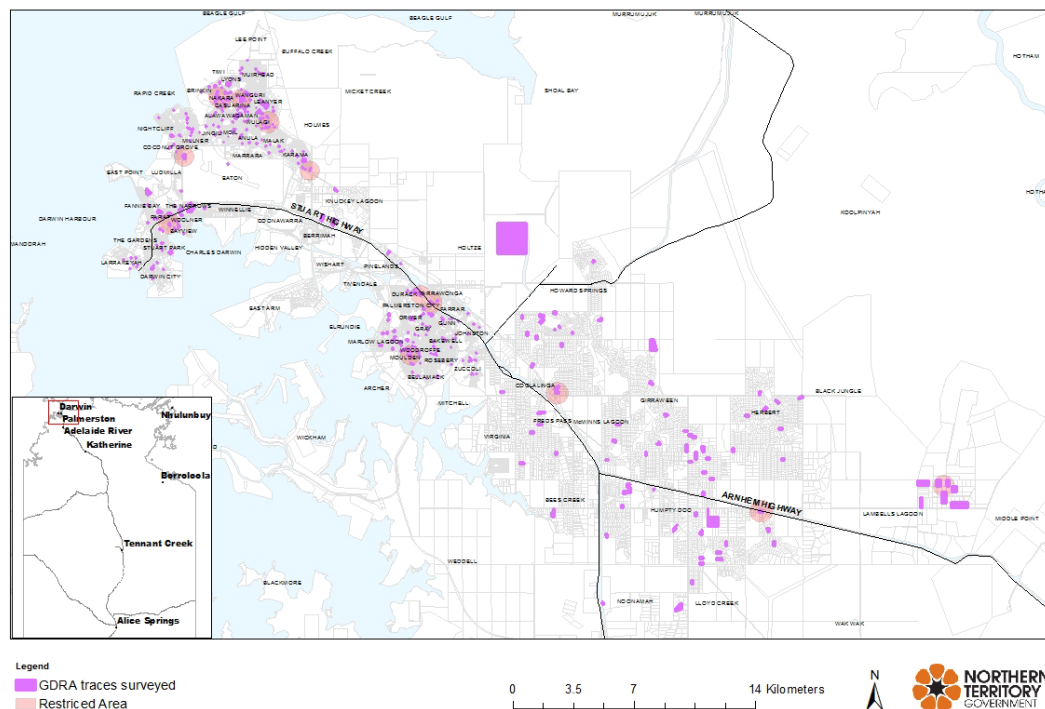
To date, all infected plants have been traced to 11 batches of citrus plants originating from the original source of the incursion. This data has been used to prioritise surveillance, develop targeted community engagement, and to identify high priority sites for remote surveillance.

A total of 981 plants from these known infected batches were moved from the original site between

January 2017 and April 2018 ('high priority plants'). Of these high priority plants, 203 plants were moved interstate and 778 remained in the NT.

Of the high risk plants in the NT 147 (19%) have been located. Of these, 64 have been removed, 25 have died and 58 remain under surveillance. Efforts are underway to trace as many of the remaining 631 as possible.

Trace premises surveyed to date



Science and epidemiology

To define the citrus canker A* host range and cultivar susceptibility, detached leaf assays were completed in the NT laboratory. Fourteen host plants and one non-host plant were tested. Symptoms of citrus canker disease began to develop at three days after inoculation with water soaked margin on the detached leaves. The results showed different levels of susceptibility to citrus canker disease (i.e. high, moderate, low and tolerant).

West Indian lime, Meyer lemon and Star Ruby grapefruit were found to be highly susceptible to citrus canker disease in detached leaf assays.

Tahiti lime, kaffir lime, *Evodia hortensis* (non-citrus host), Rio Red grapefruit, pomelo and desert lime were found to be moderately susceptible to citrus canker disease.

Navel orange, Valencia orange, Lisbon lemon and Imperial mandarin are less susceptible to citrus canker disease.

Further work is being conducted in partnership with EMAI to assess impacts on whole plants.

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Movement protocols and eradication

The plant biosecurity team has been busy undertaking inspections for citrus fruit over the last few months. In the Katherine region, two plant biosecurity officers conducted 26 pack house visits, inspected 64,170 pieces of fruit and issued 34 plant health certificates during the harvest period.

The planning team is currently working on plans for declaring proof of freedom from citrus canker disease. This includes developing plans for

sentinel plants, reintroduction of host plants to RAs, and an Area Freedom Framework.

All residents in RAs have been sent advisory letters reminding them of movement restrictions and requirements to maintain the RAs host free until restrictions are lifted.

Kaffir lime leaf national protocol

A national protocol for the movement of kaffir lime leaves outside of the NT control areas has been approved through the Sub-committee on Domestic Quarantine and Market Access (SDQMA). New South Wales (NSW), Victoria and Queensland have already amended their conditions for trade. The other national jurisdictions are working to amend their conditions to allow trade to commence as quickly as possible.

A forum was held in conjunction with the NT Farmers Association on 18 April 2019 to inform kaffir lime growers and packers of their responsibilities and requirements under the approved national protocol. Six growers attended the forum.

All known kaffir lime orchards in the NT have been inspected and declared free from citrus canker.



Field staff have completed training for kaffir lime leaf inspections as part of interstate trade protocols. This will provide support to the kaffir lime leaf growers, several of whom have resumed twice weekly consignments to southern jurisdictions. The first consignment of kaffir lime leaves was shipped to NSW on 13 May 2019.



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Communications

A media story was released on 17 May to inform that the first interstate consignment of kaffir lime leaves occurred in line with the newly instated protocol. A local kaffir lime grower was interviewed on ABC Country Hour on the same day and the program was reflected positively.

A Facebook campaign went live on 17 May 2019 featuring a video asking residents to report their citrus. As of 10 June 2019 the campaign has reached 20,448 people and achieved 1,321 clicks, of which 756 clicked through to the citrus canker webpage.

A digital media campaign went live on 29 March 2019 encouraging the community to report citrus plants purchased or received since January 2017. To date, the digital campaign has achieved 1,011,460 creative impressions and 1,223 clicks to the webpage.

Industry engagement

In line with the Communications and Engagement Strategy, activities have been targeted at encouraging industry participation and buy-in to reduce resistance to the program. NT Farmers continue to provide strong collaborative messaging, inclusive of partnered citrus industry forums :

- ORC applications—Aug 2018
- Program update—Dec 2018
- Thai young farmers—Dec 2018
- Kaffir lime leaf growers—Mar 2019
- Pre-season meeting—Mar 2019

Regular articles (12) have been displayed in external industry publications and newsletters e.g. DPIR Top Paddock, NT Farmers, Our North Our Future and Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Local nurseries were visited on 72 occasions, plus placement of public notices reminding the community not to re-introduce citrus to RAs.



Community engagement

Staff presented to Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management students at Charles Darwin University on 10 May 2019. The students learned about careers in biosecurity, general biosecurity/pest management, and the citrus canker disease.

An information stall was held at Freds Pass Rural Show on 18 and 19 May 2019. The show is located near the rural RAs and people attending the show and stall were from a wide cross section of the rural and urban areas of the Darwin region. Positive feedback about the program was received, including eight reports of citrus plants for follow up. An information stall was also held at George Brown Botanic Gardens Open Day on 28 May 2019.

Two information sessions have been held at local Darwin schools. Alawa Primary School has a significant community garden and the program engaged with students in grades 5 and 6 about program activities. Gray Primary School and Childcare Centre was visited at the same time as surveillance activities we undertaken and opportunities for future school based activities are being established. The program also engaged with students in grades 3 and 4 from Anula Primary School about biosecurity in the NT.

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Finance and resources

The program continues to track under budget.

Both normal NT commitment and cost shared expenditure are within allocated budget.

Resource planning for program activities for the remainder of 2019 and beyond has commenced.

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