

### **H-3 The Discovery of Huanglongbing in Florida**

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*Diaphorina citri* Kuwayama was found in Florida for the first time in June 1998 in Delray Beach, Palm Beach County. The infestation had spread to central Broward County to the south and southern Martin County to the north along the Florida East coast prior to its discovery. We estimate that *Diaphorina citri* had been in Florida for 6 months to 1 year before it was found. *Diaphorina citri* colonized Southeast Florida in the ensuing 6 months, after which it spread to the remainder of the state on potted plants (primarily *Murraya puniculata*) in retail trade.

Intensive surveys of southern Palm Beach County several years after the discovery of *Diaphorina citri* indicated that there was no detectable huanglongbing. Similarly, an intensive survey in 2000 in Homestead turned up no positive plant. DPI sentinel tree surveys by fruit fly detection personnel (mainly in Pinellas County, Hillsborough County and Orange County) turned up no huanglongbing suspect.

In 2004, the Florida Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) team began intensive sentinel surveys for huanglongbing in Orlando and Tampa Bay, targeting neighborhoods with high populations of people from parts of the world where huanglongbing is endemic. These surveys turned up no plant positive for huanglongbing.

In 2005, the CAPS team initiated targeted surveys of Asian farms for exotic pests of all kinds. On 24 August 2005, a pummelo tree with suspect huanglongbing symptoms was found in Florida City. Another citrus plant (unknown cultivar) with huanglongbing symptoms was found in Palmetto Bay about 18 miles north of the plant in Florida City. Both plants were diagnosed as positive for huanglongbing through PCR analysis at the Division of Plant Industry in Gainesville and confirmed by the USDA.

Subsequent surveys by the combined USDA/DPI Incident Command determined that the disease had spread throughout residential areas in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Martin counties prior to the initial two detections. Additionally, there were infected plants in several commercial groves to the west of the residential areas.