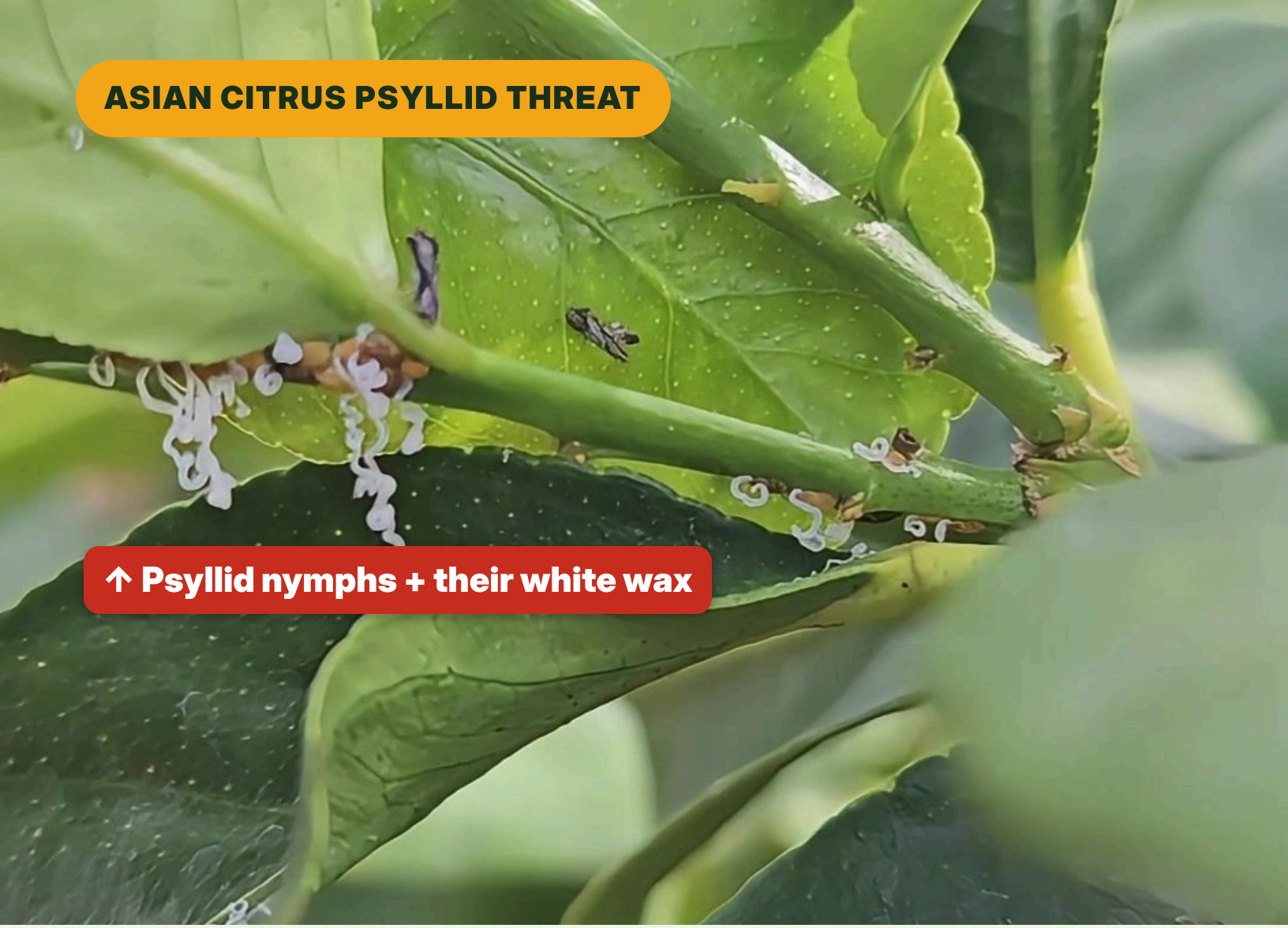


This Tiny Bug Kills Citrus Trees.

How to spot the Asian citrus psyllid in 5 minutes, and stop it before it brings incurable citrus greening to your tree.

Thrive and Grow Gardens

Tucson, Arizona · (520) 261-7021

WHY THIS MATTERS

The bug isn't the killer. The disease it carries is.

The **Asian citrus psyllid** is a tiny insect that feeds on new citrus leaves. On its own it does little damage. The danger is that it spreads **citrus greening** (also called **HLB**, or Huanglongbing), a bacterial disease with **no cure**. An infected tree slowly declines, its fruit turns bitter, and it eventually has to be removed.

> **It's already in Arizona.** Citrus greening was confirmed in Nogales in January 2025, and the area is under state and federal quarantine. The psyllid itself has been found throughout Southern Arizona's citrus-growing areas, including the Tucson region.

Florida has spent 20 years fighting this disease. Here, we still have time to keep it from spreading, and that starts in backyards like yours.

What citrus greening looks like



Blotchy, lopsided yellowing. The pattern doesn't match from one side of the leaf to the other. Fertilizer and water won't fix it.



Uneven ripening. Fruit stays green, especially at the bottom, and is often small, lopsided and bitter.

HOW TO SPOT IT

Check your new growth. That's where they hide.

Psyllids lay their eggs only on **soft, new leaves** (the "flush"). Every time your tree pushes new growth, look closely at the tips and the undersides of the young leaves.



1 White, waxy curls

Young psyllids (nymphs) are tiny and yellow-orange. They push out **curly white wax strings**, which are the easiest sign to see from a few feet away.



2 Tiny brown adults

Adults are about **1/8 inch** long and mottled brown. They feed with their **tail end tipped up at an angle** to the leaf, like a thorn sticking out.



3 Waxy drips

Look for **clear, waxy droplets** hanging from new shoots, and for new leaves that curl or twist as they open.

WHAT TO DO

Your 4-step action plan

1 Inspect every week during flush

Citrus pushes new growth in spring, after the monsoon and in fall. Spend 5 minutes a week checking new tips and leaf undersides.

2 Hang a yellow sticky trap

Catches adults so you know the moment they arrive. Check it weekly.

Monterey Asian Citrus Psyllid Trap & Lure
Our pick for early warning
Get it at ARBICO →

3 Found them? Spray the new growth

Pick one of these organic options:

Safer Brand Neem Oil
Oil spray: smothers nymphs and adults on contact
Shop on Amazon →

Bonide Captain Jack's Deadbug Brew
Spinosad spray: a good option when it's too hot for oil
Shop on Amazon →

- Soak the new flush, **undersides too**, and repeat every 7–10 days until new leaves harden off.
- **Never spray during bloom** (protect the bees). Skip oils above 90°F.

Always follow the label. In the Nogales quarantine zone, the state sprays for free.

4 Suspect greening? Don't move anything.

Don't cut or remove the tree, and don't move leaves, branches or fruit off your property. Call the Arizona Department of Agriculture:

520-628-6314
Tucson office: Pima, Cochise, Santa Cruz, Graham, Greenlee

602-542-7184
Phoenix office: Maricopa, Pinal, Yavapai and northern counties

928-341-1680
Yuma office: Yuma, La Paz, Mohave

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WATCH IT IN ACTION



Watch: what Asian citrus psyllids look like on a real tree

BEYOND PSYLLIDS

The best everyday protection: water your citrus right

There's no cure for citrus greening, and watering won't stop psyllids. But in our work across Tucson, the most common reason we see citrus trees decline isn't a pest at all. **It's watering.** Shallow or uneven watering stresses trees, and a stressed tree struggles with heat, pests and disease.

A tree that's watered deeply at the root zone, in healthy soil, puts out stronger growth and holds up better through Tucson summers.







ThriveRing Tree Irrigation Kit

Our kit for deep, even watering right at the root zone

See the ThriveRing →

Want the full picture? Read **The Most Common Fruit Tree Problems (and how to solve them)**, our guide to the watering, planting and soil mistakes we see most.

5-MINUTE WEEKLY TREE CHECK

Print this. Tape it by the back door.

- [ ] Is my tree pushing soft new leaves right now?
- [ ] Any curly white wax strings on new shoots?
- [ ] Any tiny brown bugs sitting tail-up on young leaves?
- [ ] Any waxy drips or twisted new leaves?
- [ ] Anything new on my yellow sticky trap?
- [ ] Any blotchy, lopsided yellow leaves or green-bottomed fruit?

Not sure what's on your tree?

In the Tucson area? We'll come to you. Book a 1-hour on-site visit and we'll check your citrus and fruit trees, irrigation and landscape, find what's attacking your trees, and give you a clear plan to fix it.

Book your on-site visit →

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Thrive and Grow Gardens · ThriveAndGrowGardens.com
info@thriveandgrowgardens.com

Sources: University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, *Arizona Homeowner Guide to Citrus Greening Disease* (AZ2132); UC Agriculture & Natural Resources, Asian citrus psyllid homeowner management; USDA APHIS citrus greening quarantine notice (Feb 2026). This guide is general education. Always read and follow pesticide labels.