

March 29, 2017



Be on the Lookout!
By Phyllis Lee
UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

California has become home to two non-native pests that the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the UCCE Master Gardeners in all 58 counties are tracking. Master Gardener Mary Tran has written previous articles for the Mt. Democrat about the brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB), and the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP). However, with the plentiful rains we've had this year and our usual hot summers, Master Gardeners want to again remind you of what to look for and who to contact if you suspect one of these insects is in your garden.

The brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) has become a pest in Sacramento, Chico, and other areas close to El Dorado County, and is excellent at 'hitching rides' on cars. It is about 5/8" long, marbled brown, with two white stripes on the antennae and rough shoulders. It's a voracious eater and will consume landscape plantings as well as vegetables and fruit trees -- including the fruit and leaves. Chinese elms, maples, birches, dogwoods are just a few of the trees targeted. Apricots, peaches, cherries, and plums are vulnerable, as are vegetables in our gardens. It frequently clusters in groups numbering in the hundreds on tree trunks, patios, or vegetable rows and loves to over winter in homes. Traps have been put out in several parts of our county to detect its presence, but homeowners may be first to find it in our county. If you find any suspect BMSBs, place one in a sealable plastic container and bring it to the Master Gardener office at 311 Fair Lane, Placerville for identification and assistance in how to deal with it as pesticides are ineffective. For more information see <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74169.html>.

The Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) is the second insect to watch for. This pest was first discovered in 1998 in Florida and by 2009, it spread to South Carolina, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Texas, Arizona, Hawaii, and California. They're as tiny as an aphid and mottled brown with red eyes. It feeds on all citrus from oranges to lemons and limes, as well as related ornamentals such as box orange, Indian curry leaf, and orange jasmine. The adult rests with its rear end up at a 45 degree angle. However, it's the nymph stage you'll notice as it feeds on new,

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soft leaf growth sucking the plants sap, and then excretes a 'honeydew' that looks like whitish, waxy, curly strands. New growth is stunted, however that's not our biggest concern. The Asian citrus psyllid can carry a disease called huanglongbing (HLB) caused by a bacteria. There is no cure for HLB at this time, and the plant/tree will die within five years. HLB disease has spread to nearly all of the commercial citrus orchards in Florida and has been found three times in So. California in backyards where citrus trees or branches to graft were brought in illegally. Our best hope is controlling psyllid populations before they can spread this disease. Inspect new growth monthly and look for twisted leaves, waxy tubules. Also, do not bring citrus trees or fruit into El Dorado County from quarantined areas, and only plant citrus trees from reputable nurseries. Quarantined areas for fruit and trees include all counties south of Bakersfield, as well as Santa Barbara and Tulare counties, and areas in San Joaquin, Solano, and Placer County. If you spot ACP, contact the CDFA Exotic Pest Hotline (1-800-491-1899). Staff will help you confirm, and advise you about the next steps. For more info see: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pnasiancitruspsyllid.pdf>.

Master Gardeners are pleased to present a number of FREE Public Education Classes in coming weeks. On Saturday, April 1 will be a discussion and demonstration on composting. Compost helps retain moisture – which saves water, suppresses weeds, prevents soil erosion, and loosens compacted soils for better drainage. It is rewarding to know you are turning waste into nutrient rich organic material for your garden. Class will be 9:00 a.m. to noon at Folsom Lake College El Dorado Center/Sherwood Demonstration Garden, 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville.

Be sure to also put on your calendars, our upcoming Spring Plant Sale which will be held on Saturday, April 29. We'll have a whole article on the event next week.

UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512). Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at [http://ucanr.edu/mastergardener e-news](http://ucanr.edu/mastergardener-e-news). You can also find us on Facebook.