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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CITRUS CONCERNS THIS THANKSGIVING **Chance to Carry Home Dangerous Pest**

(Phoenix) Arizona's citrus industry and homeowners face threats from a dangerous hitchhiker. The Asian Citrus Psyllid is the size of the tip of a pen. The small bug can carry and transmit the deadly citrus greening disease which has the potential to kill orange, grapefruit, lemon and all types of citrus trees around the state.

"Since 2009 we've battled this pest, preventing it from covering the whole state," said Mark Killian, director of the Department of Agriculture. "So far we've been successful keeping the citrus greening bacteria from our state. With the disease widespread in Mexico and its recent discovery at a home near Los Angeles, everyone needs to be very careful when traveling - to protect our citrus from both the bug and the disease."

Citrus in Arizona means more than the hundreds of thousands of trees dotting backyards, it's an important industry. Citrus is an essential part of the \$17.1 billion agricultural impact on Arizona's economy.

At this point a state quarantine covers almost 26,000 square miles to contain the psyllid. The state works with industry, Master Gardener programs, the University of Arizona and

federal partners to prevent the spread. One type of wasp, a natural enemy of the psyllid, is being tested to combat the pest in Yuma and western Arizona.

Numerous commercial groves and thousands of backyard trees outside the state's quarantine are not infested. Every person who travels out of and into Arizona has a responsibility to protect those trees.

"Citrus fruit that hasn't had the stems and leaves removed can carry the psyllid or the disease," said John Caravetta, associate director at the Department. "Some travelers may not be aware of or remember the quarantine during their holiday travels and could accidentally bring home the pest or the disease."

The department's [website](#) has tips on how to prevent bringing the pest and disease into our state. One simple prevention is to buy local produce and nursery stock. Don't bring fruit, trees or slips for grafting from areas where the psyllid or the disease are present.

Help protect one of Arizona's 5 Cs with this simple phrase: "Don't Move Citrus."

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