

Citrus fruit borer

Have you seen this citrus pest?

What is a citrus fruit borer?

The caterpillar of the citrus fruit moth (*Citripestis sagittiferella*) is known as the citrus fruit borer. The borer is a serious threat to our citrus industry because it burrows into the fruit rind, and eventually the fruit flesh, causing internal rot and fruit drop. Besides decreasing productivity and market value due to scarring of fruit and fruit becoming inedible, market access could also be affected.

Citrus fruit borer (*Citripestis sagittiferella*) is not known to occur in Australia.

What does citrus fruit borer look like?

Adults

- Adult moths are about 10 mm long, grey-brown with yellow to grey-brown forewings and transparent hind wings.
- They are strong nocturnal flyers.



Citrus fruit borer adult moth

Photo courtesy of Y. Chanbang, Chiang Mai University

Caterpillars

- After the eggs hatch, the caterpillars bore into citrus peel, then tunnel into the pith and citrus flesh.

- Initially, the caterpillars are orange to dark reddish-brown with a dark brown head, and can grow up to 20 mm long.
- When mature, the caterpillars fall to the ground on silken threads and pupate in the soil. Pupation takes about 10 days.



The citrus fruit borer caterpillar

Photo courtesy of A. Beattie, University of Western Sydney

Eggs

- The eggs are laid in clusters on the underside of citrus fruit.

What symptoms does citrus fruit borer cause on plants?

- The borers leave minute holes in the fruit rind, and cavities under the fruit surface. These holes might be associated with caterpillar frass or gumming.
- Internal fruit rots introduced by borers, can lead to fruit drop.

Which plants are affected?

Citrus fruit borers feed on plants in the family Rutaceae, particularly citrus.



Citrus fruit borer damage to fruit

Photo courtesy of Y. Chanbang, Chiang Mai University

Where does citrus fruit borer occur?

Citrus fruit borer is known to occur in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and western Indonesia.

How does citrus fruit borer spread?

Long-distance spread occurs by movement of infested citrus fruit or soil containing pupae. Long-distance dispersal by strong winds may also be possible.

Citrus fruit borer could be introduced into Australia through illegal importation of fruit or soil. The Australian Government closely regulates approved plant imports and monitors for illegal plant movement.

How do I look for citrus fruit borer?

- Inspect fallen fruit from citrus trees for minute holes and cavities under the fruit surface, with caterpillar frass or gumming.
- Cut open fruit to look for citrus fruit borer caterpillars and damage caused by caterpillars.
- If detected, report immediately to Biosecurity Queensland.

Disclaimer: The material in this publication was prepared from the most recent information available at the time of publication. It is intended as a guide only.

How can I protect my farm from citrus fruit borer?

There are simple steps you can take to protect your farm:

- Be aware of the citrus fruit borer threat.
- To avoid introducing citrus fruit borer onto your property, establish new plantings with reputable pest- and disease-free nursery stock. On receipt of any new plants, check that they are free from pest and disease. If citrus fruit borer is detected, isolate the nursery stock from healthy plants until official checks are completed.
- Make sure that you and your farm workers are familiar with all life cycle stages of the citrus fruit borer and the fruit damage it causes. Regularly check your orchard and report any unusual or unfamiliar symptoms.

Have you seen a citrus fruit borer?

In Queensland, citrus fruit borer is prohibited matter under the Biosecurity Act 2014. If you believe that you may have detected citrus fruit borer, you must report it immediately to Biosecurity Queensland. You must also take all reasonable steps to minimise the risks of spreading the pest or making the situation worse.

Be on the lookout for this pest and immediately report it to Biosecurity Queensland. Do not move any fruit or soil off your property—this can spread the pest.

Call Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or the National Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

Further information

For more information, call Biosecurity Queensland on **13 25 23** or visit **www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au**