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Citrus bacterial canker (*Xanthomonas axonopodis* pv. *citri*) Type A (Asiatic strain) reported from Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia and Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands

In May 2000 the Plant Protection/Quarantine Officer on Kosrae identified some citrus trees with canker-like symptoms and informed the SPC-Plant Protection Service (Pohnpei). A survey was carried out to confirm the presence of and determine the distribution of the disease in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Samples were sent to Dr John Hartung, USDA ARS Fruit Laboratory where they were subjected to the Polymerase Chain Reaction assay for citrus bacterial canker. It is now confirmed that the disease is present in Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia and in Majuro, Marshall Islands.

It is recommended that quarantine officers in countries at risk of accidentally importing the disease incinerate any citrus wood, fruit or leaves found in cargo or luggage originating from the infected areas. To minimize yield losses and the spread of the disease to other countries the Kosrae Department of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries has destroyed all canker-infected trees. A public awareness programme was conducted via the media. Kosrae Department of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries is continually monitoring the pest situation.

Xanthomonas axonopodis pv. *citri* Type A affects members of the plant family Rutaceae, including most citrus species and hybrids including grapefruit, lime, sweet lime, and trifoliate orange. The disease can be identified by the small, round, raised, blister-like lesions that occur on the fruit, leaves and twigs. Older lesions have a yellow "halo" surrounding them. Canker bacteria survive and multiply primarily in naturally occurring lesions. Bacteria may also survive in crevices in the bark tissues of citrus trees. The disease spreads by wind-driven rain, flooding, air currents, insects, birds, and human movement within orchards. Movement of infected plants, seedlings, propagative material, and fruit can spread the disease over long distances as can contaminated clothing, tools, packing boxes, and other items associated with harvesting and postharvest handling of fruit.

If citrus canker is suspected a specimen should be sent to a canker specialist to confirm the identification as the symptoms of citrus scab, which also occurs in the regions, (*Elsinoe fawcettii*) are similar.



The leaves (left) and fruits (right) affected by Citrus Bacterial Canker. Photos: Konrad Englberger

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Communications of pest and disease incidents of interest to the Pacific region should be sent to: **Plant Protection Service**, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji Islands. Tel:(+679) 370733; Fax: (+679)370021; email:pps@spc.int