

Citrus Decline in South India

SWEET ORANGE [*Citrus sinensis* (L.) Osbeck], acid lime [*C. aurantiifolia* (Christm.) Swing.], and santras (*C. reticulata* Blanco) have suffered considerable decline and dieback in India. During the course of study tours undertaken in the Citrus Dieback Investigation Project, the writer had opportunity to observe the nature of the decline in the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Mysore.

Tristeza virus and its vector, the tropical citrus aphid (*Toxoptera citricidus* Kirk.), are widespread in southern and western India but not yet reported from northern India. In Maharashtra state and Andhra Pradesh, 25-30 per cent of the sweet orange trees die within 15-20 years, which is attributed largely to tristeza. Tristeza virus is practically universal in acid lime trees in these two states; vein clearing and stem pitting symptoms are commonly seen.

Santra trees on jamberi (*C. jambhiri* Lushington) rootstock in the Nagpur region of Maharashtra are declining, though not severely, and display stem pitting on the rootstock and, less extensively, on the top. Since rough lemon (*C. jambhiri*) is generally recognized to be tolerant of tristeza virus, the decline of trees on jamberi is probably due to the co-existence of some other viruses as well.

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