

Current Research Objectives

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Research topic: Fresh Fruit Quality and Postharvest Handling

Primary Research Objective(s): Developing pre- and postharvest methods to reduce HLB-induced decay and peel disorders

Research Goal: Reduce decay and other quality losses during postharvest handling and marketing of fresh citrus.

Outcomes to date: Discovered that HLB is inducing fruit decay in the field and that new pre-harvest control methods and careful attention to postharvest decay control measures are needed. Enhanced preharvest fruit drop is sometimes, but not always associated with field development of the decay organisms. Also discovered that use of a preharvest antitranspirant (Vapor Gard®) or a foliar potassium application can reduce peel breakdown after harvest.

While effective preharvest materials/techniques are still a critical need to reduce decay developing in the field, packers are continue to optimize postharvest fungicide applications and degreening practices based on UF IFAS recommendations. Concerning peel breakdown, potassium has become commonly included in foliar nutrition spays intended to improve tree/fruit health, but these also can improve peel health and reduce postharvest breakdown during marketing.

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