



Pictured is one of the Rex Clonts groves in Lake County as dusk settles in.

# A grower's observations on a psyllid control spray program

By Ryan Atwood

**R**ex Clonts is a citrus grower in Lake County who realized the importance of psyllid control immediately after citrus greening was reported in the state. In 2006, he began spraying for psyllid control in his grove and observing the results of different materials, timing and application techniques. This article contains some of his ideas and observations.

The first year (2006) Clonts Groves used one sprayer which took three weeks to spray the entire grove. Clonts was not satisfied with the amount of psyllid control achieved. "It seemed we always were having psyllid populations flare up in one part of the grove or the other. I would say that our spray program was not very successful."

The decision was made to contract out spray applications in 2007. This

reduced the spray application time from three weeks to one week with the use of three sprayers. The ability to spray the whole grove in one week made a big difference in lowering population levels for two reasons. First, as in wide area applications, spraying a larger area in a shorter time span gives the psyllid less chance to build up population levels in an untreated area and move into a recently treated area. Second, scheduling an application every four weeks means you have three weeks of 'quiet time' to closely monitor psyllid and beneficial population levels in order to plan the most appropriate product for the next spray.

Clonts likes Danitol for a dormant spray early in the year before the first new buds open. He thinks the dormant spray is "the single most important spray" in reducing popula-

tion levels in his grove. Research data collected by University of Florida entomologist Michael Rogers has shown dormant sprays are very effective in reducing psyllid population levels into the spring.

In early spring there is not much pressure (due to his dormant spray to reduce population levels); during these times of the year, Clonts's spray program consists of oil. In early summer he likes to use Micromite and Agrimek as they are easier on beneficials, and provide some leafminer and mite control. He rotates products such as Sevin and Dimethoate when population levels start to rise. He prefers Lorsban as his last spray in the late summer because he feels it has a long residual effect that time of year.

Clonts Groves sprayed for psyllid control four times in 2006, seven times in 2007, and plans on spraying seven to nine times in 2008. Clonts said, "I was much happier with our psyllid control in 2007." Todd Holtsberry, who conducts Clonts Groves's greening survey program as pest and disease manager for Statewide Harvesting and Hauling, said that "Clonts grove has lower psyllids population levels compared to other groves around the state."

Clonts not only was one of the first growers to start a psyllid control program in Central Florida, but also was the first grower to survey his grove for greening symptoms. His grove has had one of the first reported greening finds in Lake County. He plans on removing symptomatic trees as long as the infection levels stay low, continuing with his psyllid control program, and begin incorporating more alternative practices involving plant nutrition.

*This publication series documenting results of grower trials will appear as a monthly column developed by the citrus Extension agents. If you have conducted successful trials for the management of psyllids, greening or canker and would be willing to share your experiences, please contact your citrus Extension agent to allow your results to be shared with fellow citrus growers.*

*The use of brand names does not indicate specific endorsement or exclusion of products or services. When using any pesticide, you must read and follow the pesticide label completely, as the label is the law.*