

Grower trials, tribulations and observations

Sprout control for clipped trees

By Stephen H. Futch

Over the years, many citrus growers have applied various herbicide materials to control regrowth sprouts from clipped stumps of citrus trees where the above-ground portion of the tree was removed due to various diseases or disorders. Each product used has advantages and disadvantages related to sprout control and potential side effects. One noted side effect of herbicide application to stumps is the potential chemical movement into adjacent trees via a root grafted to the tree that was removed. Some labeled products for sprout control on stumps clearly note this precaution.

In an effort to determine the effectiveness of Remedy Ultra® on the control of citrus sprouts, a field study was conducted in a DeSoto County citrus grove. Citrus trees in this study were removed by clipping them off above the soil line with a standard tree shear that is common to the timber industry and has been used in citrus for numerous years. Before clipping, all trees were diagnosed positive for citrus greening based on visual symptoms in various parts of the tree canopy. Although symptomatic, trees were otherwise healthy and actively growing. The age of the removed trees varied from seven to 15 years.

This study was designed as a randomized complete block design whereby citrus tree stumps were sequentially assigned to randomly receive one of four treatments. The four treatments consisted of 25, 50 or 75 percent mixture of Remedy Ultra by volume in diesel fuel compared to an untreated control. All treatments were applied with a 1-gallon compression sprayer. The treatment solution was applied to the outer cambium area of the cut stump in a volume that mini-

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mized runoff to the soil. Each stump received approximately one to two ounces of spray solution and varied with the size of the stump being treated. All treatments were applied within five minutes of clipping which left the entire root system intact in the soil. Each treatment was applied to 15 stumps for a total of 60 in the study.

in the effectiveness of the treatment on sprout control is likely to occur. Thus, it would be prudent to make the application of the selected herbicide as soon as possible after clipping to ensure maximum sprout control. Additional factors that may affect sprout control could include rain or irrigation after herbicide application to the treated stump surface.



Above left is a stump with citrus sprouts. Sprouts must be controlled to minimize greening sources. At right is a stump that has sprouts effectively controlled with herbicides.

This water on the cut surface could dilute the applied material, reducing absorption, translocation and effectiveness.

In an effort to assure that the entire stump is properly treated, the spray solution could contain a dye to aid in visual confirmation of coverage of the cut surface. This dye

will also stain the cut surface for a short period of time to confirm treatment has taken place as well as aid in later inspections.

While the control of sprouts from citrus stumps has always been important, current needs to minimize the greening disease make it even more essential today than in the past. Resprouts from the stump may harbor the greening bacteria and the vigorous young flush is highly attractive to psyllids. With current production practices involving clipping and tree removal, making sure all stumps remain sprout free with time is imperative.

When using any pesticide, please be sure to read the label and follow the directions to ensure the product is properly used and applied.

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