

Urban Dirt

Gardening Events and Information for Texans

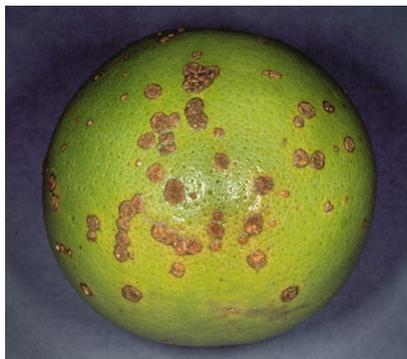
Citrus Canker Update

Article by Terri Simon, Master Gardener

Definition: Quarantine- a means used to eliminate, lessen or segregate disease outbreaks.

Citrus canker continues to pop up in sections of Texas. Sometimes confused with citrus greening, (also referred to as HLB), it is caused by a bacteria called *Xanthomonas citri* subsp. *citri*. The disease is contagious and can be spread by weather, people, animals, or by mechanical means such as contaminated equipment. Once introduced, it can quickly spread throughout a citrus orchard. Lesioned fruit produced by the tree is unmarketable and inedible. Eventually the tree quits producing. Currently there is no cure for the pathogen.

When Florida lost its battle to citrus canker due to storms in 2004 and 2005, the bacteria began spreading. Contaminated fruit trees spotted in Texas in 2016 added more areas and counties to a citrus quarantine. In May 2016, a confirmed infected plant was located along



Grapefruit with citrus canker lesions
Photo courtesy of Aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu

Brays Bayou greenway in Houston. Another confirmed diseased tree had been found earlier in Rancho Viejo, Texas in October 2015. On July 28 2016, a retail nursery in Richmond, Fort Bend County, Texas was found to have nearly 300 citrus trees infected with citrus canker. All infected trees found have been destroyed.

Once an area has been quarantined in regards to citrus, all varieties and other quarantined articles within the quarantined area must follow the regulations. No citrus products or trees can be brought in or out of an area; the quarantine remains



Leaf lesions
Photo courtesy of Aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu

in effect until a period of three years passes without an occurrence of the disease. Recent areas placed under quarantine include the Richmond Citrus Canker Quarantined Area in areas of Richmond, Tx in Ft. Bend County, and Harris County. The Rancho Viejo Canker Quarantined Area has also been added. It includes sections northwest of Brownsville in Cameron County.

As gardeners, we can help prevent and control the spread of diseases such as citrus canker by being alert, monitoring and reporting any suspicious conditions in our home citrus gardens as well as those in public areas. The infected tree mentioned above, spotted along Brays Bayou, was reported by a concerned citizen through a USDA mobile website called saveourcitrus.org. Since quarantine status is frequently updated, refer to one of the following references to stay current.

cont'd on pg. 4

Upcoming Events

January 2017

Green Thumb Gardening Series: *Plant advice and tips from the Master Gardeners* ***Soil and Composting***

Jan. 12, Barbara Bush Library, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Jan. 17, Spring Branch Memorial Library, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Jan. 19, Freeman Branch Library, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Jan. 21, Maude Smith Marks Library, 10:00 - noon

Plant Sale

Jan. 28, Fruit Tree Sale and Workshops. Citrus, apple, peach, pear, avocado, berry and pecan varieties suitable for our area. Bear Creek Gardens/Extension, 3303 Bear Creek Drive, Houston, 77084

Educational Program: *Increase your gardening know-how*

Jan. 12, Genoa Friendship Garden Education Center, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd, Houston 77045, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., *Vermiculture (Composting worms)* by Charlene Perry, DiggIt Organics.

Jan. 19, Gulf Coast Fruit Study - Speakers: Skip Richter, Extension Agent - *Citrus disease and pest update*; Dr. Ethan Natelson - *Dwarf Severenia Buxifolia*. 6:30 -8:30 p.m., Bear Creek Auditorium, 3303 Bear Creek Drive, Houston, 77084

Open Garden Day: *Meet the Master Gardeners!*

Jan. 16, 8:30-11:00 a.m., Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd. Plants for sale in the Greenhouse.

Jan. 24, Workshops & children's activities, *Soils and Compost*, 10:00-11:00 a.m. Bear Creek Gardens/Extension, 3303 Bear Creek Drive, Houston, 77084

February 2017

Green Thumb Gardening Series: *Plant advice and tips from the Master Gardeners* ***Spring Vegetable Gardening***

Feb. 9, Barbara Bush Library, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Feb. 16, Freeman Branch Library, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Feb. 18, Maude Smith Marks Library, 10:00 - noon.

Feb. 21, Spring Branch Memorial Library, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Plant Sale

Feb. 18, Fruit tree & tomato sale: citrus, apple, peach, pear, avocado, berry, pecan and tomatoes suitable for our area. Precinct 2, Genoa Friendship Gardens, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd, Houston 77045

Open Garden Day: *Meet the Master Gardeners!*

Feb. 20, 8:30 -11a.m., Genoa Friendship Gardens, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd, Houston 77045

Feb. 28, Workshops & children's activities, *Spring Vegetable Gardening* 10:00 - 10:45 a.m.

Master Gardener Help Line - (281) 855-5600

Visit txmg.org or contact the Harris County Extension Office, 281.855.5600, coordinator.harrishort@gmail.com for information.

HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

Fruit Tree Sale

Saturday January 28th 2017

9am to 1 pm

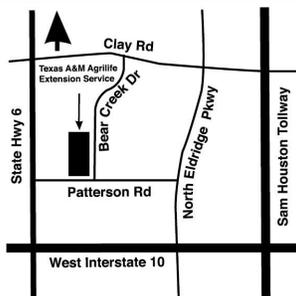
3033 Bear Creek Dr. Houston TX 77084

8:00 AM Symposium open to public

9:00 AM Sale Gates open until 1:00 PM



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION



HARRIS COUNTY
Master Gardener
ASSOCIATION

[Click here for Fruit Tree Sale Catalog](#)

Plant of the Month - Giant leopard plant

(*Farfugium japonicum* 'Gigantea', *Ligularia tussilaginea* 'Gigantea')

Article by Beth Braun, Master Gardener

Ligularia is a genus of about 150 ornamental perennial plants native to Central and East Asia and some parts of Europe. The Gigantea cultivar is grown for its large, rounded, shiny leaves. "Large" here means dinner plate- to platter-size! It grows in clumps 3 or 4 feet wide that look like a mass of shiny green open umbrellas. The Giant leopard plant is terrific as a single specimen plant in the ground or in a patio container. It makes a big—literally—statement planted en masse. The flowers are a bonus, and come in late summer and fall when other blooming perennials may be fading.

A note of caution when considering this plant for your garden: Humans and animals may have allergic reactions if parts of this plant are consumed, or by coming into contact with its sap.

Size: 18-24"H x 30-36"W

USDA Zones: 8, 9, 10

Care: Ligularias like fertile, moist soil. Most literature recommends part sun to full shade, but a row of these in my neighbor's yard looked fine during the hot months even though they're planted next to pavement and get afternoon sun. Moisture seems to be the key.

Propagation: Easiest by division; also by seed.

Problems: Slugs and snails.



Citrus Canker Update - *cont'd from pg. 1*

To learn more and become proactive about the spread of citrus disease, there are several excellent references available:

<http://counties.agrilife.org/fortbend/files/2016/10/Citrus-Canker-Disease-Combined.pdf>

This website lets you download the free EPLP-032: Citrus Canker pamphlet. It's a wonderful reference with valuable weblinks and contact information. It also has an article on Citrus Canker by Kevin Ong and Olufemi Alabi along with more contact and reference material.

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/pests-diseases/save-our-citrus/report-it>

Think your citrus tree is sick? This site has disease photos and download capabilities to report suspected diseased citrus trees.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEobINLr9fU>

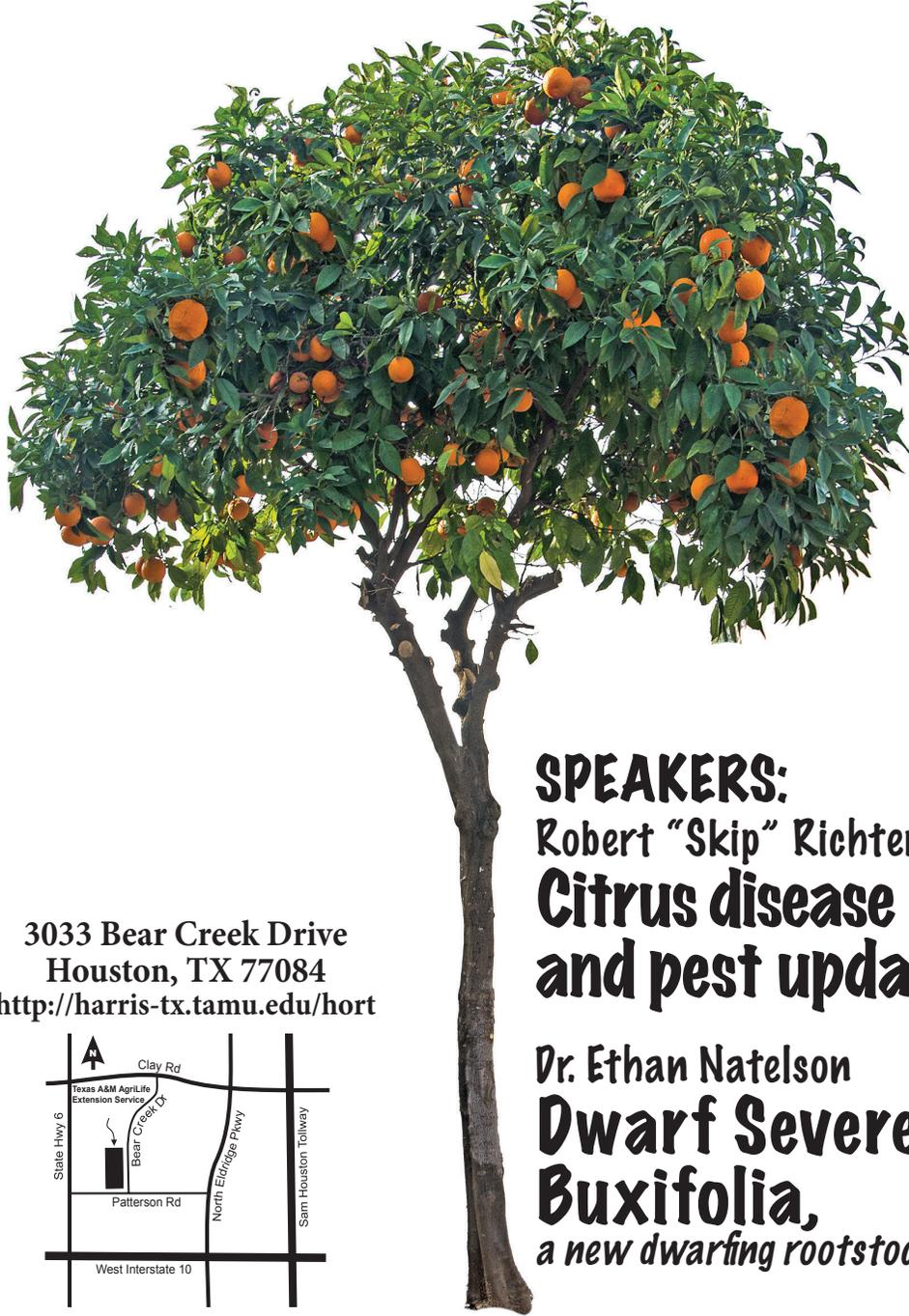
This video provides great visual info for citrus canker. It was downloaded in 2011 and currently being updated.

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1yXkdWdFF_hbH6h0C2bOM6nBhs5g&ll=27.84542337519779%2C-96.53718049999998&z=7

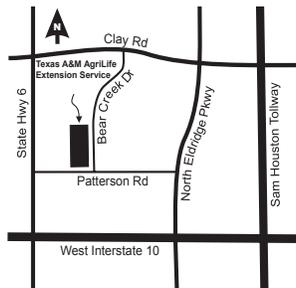
Provides a map of current citrus canker areas.

Please place link info into your web browser if web pages do not immediately load.

GULF COAST FRUIT STUDY GROUP PRESENTS:
January Speakers Program at Bear Creek
JANUARY 19, 2017 - 6:30 - 8:00 PM
NO CHARGE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



3033 Bear Creek Drive
Houston, TX 77084
<http://harris-tx.tamu.edu/hort>



SPEAKERS:
Robert "Skip" Richter
**Citrus disease
and pest update**

Dr. Ethan Natelson
**Dwarf Severenia
Buxifolia,**
a new dwarfing rootstock.



For information about upcoming Master Gardener events and programs, please visit our web site, give us a call or "like" us at www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyMasterGardeners, <https://www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyHorticulture> or visit our blog page <http://agrilife.org/harrishort>. Educational programs of the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.



Herb of the Month - Red bay Laurel (*Persea borbonia*)

Article by Karen McGowan, Master Gardener

Red bay Laurel (*Persea borbonia*) is our herb of the month for January.

A graceful, slow-growing evergreen tree that can after many years nonetheless reach heights of up to sixty-five feet and three feet in diameter, the Red bay laurel is native to the southeastern United States. According to Susan Cerulean, author of the article “An Undefended Buffet: The Unnecessary Extinction of the Red bay, a Defining Southern Tree”, “red bays are the quiet infrastructure of forests from Virginia south into the Everglades, and west all the way to Texas. If you walk into a Southern river forest, or a coastal hammock, red bay will brush against your knees, your chest, and your head. High in the canopy, there it is too, filling up the space between the level ground and the branching of live oaks, palms, and pines. You can count dozens to hundreds of trees per acre.”

Propagated through seeds, the Red bay laurel’s preferred environment is as an understory tree, in light shade, with average to dry moisture preferences. It is hardy in zones 7-9 once established. Not recommended for formal bed landscaping, the red bay laurel prefers the company of other woodland trees and shrubs in groves, or as a single specimen. The dried leaves of the Red bay laurel are prized by many southern cooks as an authentic accompaniment to traditional and adapted dishes of the south that may call for simply “bay leaf” (that is, the common spice, bay leaf, which normally is obtained from bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*), a European species in the same family), within the recipe’s ingredient list. The Red bay laurel has very aromatic leaves that lend a unique taste and fragrance to a wide geographical spread of southern dishes, from the family table in Savannah, Georgia to the most celebrated Creole restaurant settings in New Orleans, Louisiana. Interestingly, Red bay laurel is a species in the plant family that includes sassafras (the ground leaves of which comprise gumbo filé), and avocado, as well as the bay laurel.

Noted horticulturists have observed beginning in the early 2000s dual, expanding dangers among southern forest homes of the Red bay laurel: Laurel wilt, for which little can be done once the invasive disease has taken hold, and red bay ambrosia beetle. Cerulean states that the beetle “does not actually feed on the wood of the red bay, but on a fungus she has carried and inoculated into the tree’s sapwood. The beetles bore tunnels into red bays, where they lay their eggs, deposit the laurel wilt spores, and then farm the



Photos courtesy of Treesearch Farms, Inc.



fungus—at the expense of the tree’s life. Within weeks or months at most, the fungus clogs the circulatory system of the tree, and the red bay will die.”

The decline of Red bay in southern forests represents a loss for humans, animals -- and butterflies: The *Palamedes swallowtail* butterfly is highly dependent, in its caterpillar form, on the red bay laurel. States Laurie Reid, a forest entomologist employed by the state of South Carolina: “The first thing that came to my mind when I heard about redbay mortality was butterflies. My God, I thought, what will the swallowtails lay their eggs on if the redbay is gone?” Animals affected by the red bay’s outcome are many and diverse: The Red bay’s blue fruits draw tanagers, warblers, and wild turkeys. Deer browse on the dark evergreen foliage of the tree. For humans, it means a deeply diminished southern forest.

cont'd on pg. 7

Herb of the Month - *cont'd from pg. 6*

As Kris Seresoff-King of the Nature Conservancy adds, “Red bay is so prolific and shady it affects the microclimate of the forests it lives in. It’s literally degrees cooler under the canopy of a red bay forest.”

In addition to spreading public awareness of the red bay’s endangerment, we can take prescribed precautions upon noting disease or insect infestation. Florida entomologist Dr. Bud Mayfield says, “there are things people can do to slow the spread of this disease. We’re emphasizing not moving the beetle vector, not moving firewood or dead trees. Although the redbay ambrosia beetle is undoubtedly invading new territory through its own flight, it can move much farther and faster with human help. Firewood, logs, or nursery stock of wilted or dead trees should not be transported, except to be destroyed locally, by burning or in a landfill.”

These are the defenses for the red bay laurel – now on to the more positive, pro-active measures: Public education and planting practices. A healthy red bay laurel makes a sound edition to the wooded garden of any southerner. Enjoy the native tree’s beautiful, dark green leaves throughout the year; aesthetically, as an attractor of animals and butterflies, and as an addition to your recipe routines. Here is a recipe that capitalizes on the delicate fragrance of the red bay laurel:

Roasted Turkey Breast (recipe by Karen McGowan)

- One large Butterball turkey breast
- 1 quart low-fat buttermilk
- 6 TB brining mix, such as Williams-Sonoma Quick-Brine
- 2 oranges, cut in quarters
- 1 Meyer lemon, quartered
- 3 dried Red bay laurel leaves
- 1 TB grapeseed or canola oil
- 4 TB unsalted butter, diced and divided
- Salt and pepper to taste

Remove inner packing from turkey breast cavity, rinse turkey breast thoroughly inside and out, and pat dry. Place breast into a brining bag or large plastic bag that can be sealed closed over the breast, and place into a large bowl (to prevent accidental spillage). Combine buttermilk and brining mix. Pour over turkey breast until completely covered, and seal bag. Place in refrigerator for 48 hours.



Photos courtesy of Treesearch Farms, Inc.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Remove turkey breast from fridge, and discard brining mix, rinsing turkey breast well. Pat dry thoroughly with paper towels. Place orange and lemon quarters into a bowl along with Red bay Laurel leaves, salt and pepper, oil, and 2 TB of the diced butter. Toss lightly. Spoon mixture into cavity of turkey breast and set breast, cavity down, onto a baking rack that has been inserted into a roasting pan. Using the remaining diced butter, loosen skin of turkey breast and insert pieces of butter intermittently between skin of turkey breast and meat. Salt and pepper the outside of the turkey breast to your taste preferences. Roast uncovered on 325 degrees for 1 ½ to 2 hours, or until skin is golden brown. Remove from oven and immediately cover tightly with foil, allowing to rest 15 minutes. If easier to handle, remove orange mixture from cavity prior to slicing. Uncover, slice, serve, and enjoy!

Citations:

<http://www.terrain.org/articles/22/cerulean.htm>

<http://srel.uga.edu/outreach/ecoviews/ecoview110911.htm>

<http://floridata.com/Plants/Lauraceae/Persea%20borbonia/80>

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harris.agrilife.org/program-areas/hort/

hcmga.tamu.edu

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The Harris County Master Gardeners as well as Texas A&M Agrilife Extension - Harris County Horticulture are actively participating on Facebook offering tips, lists, news and plant advice almost daily. The best part, instead of locating planting guides or insect documents, and sale dates for individuals, you can add the HCMG site



your account and easily share information with others. This is a definite timesaving device for these busy garden days and helps promote our organization.

www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyMasterGardeners

www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyHorticulture

URBAN DIRT • JANUARY 2017



January Green Thumb Gardening Series *Soil and Composting*

January 12

Barbara Bush Library
6:30-8:30 p.m.

January 17

Spring Branch Memorial Library
6:30-8:30 p.m.

January 19

Freeman Branch Library
6:30-8:30 p.m.

January 21

Maude Smith Marks Library
10 a.m. - Noon