

Unusual galling on citrus—have you seen it?

Background of the detection

In March 2007, samples of citrus rootstock twigs with unusual insect damage were collected from a property in the Central Burnett region of Queensland.

A single wasp reared from the infested twigs resembled the native citrus gall wasp (CGW, *Bruchophagus fellsis*). However, the damage, symptoms and larvae were sufficiently different from CGW to raise concerns that this may be an exotic pest or a native pest not previously associated with citrus.

Wasps reared from infested twigs were identified to be from the genus *Eurytoma*, but the species could not be determined.

To date, damage has been noted on twigs, thorns, soft terminal growth and the bases of midribs and petioles, mainly on field-grown Troyer citrange rootstocks or regrowth beneath unthrifty scions.

Surveys of orchards in proximity to known detections have not revealed damage to scion material or fruit.

At present, it is not known if the wasp attacks citrus varieties commonly grown in Victoria.

Symptoms and damage

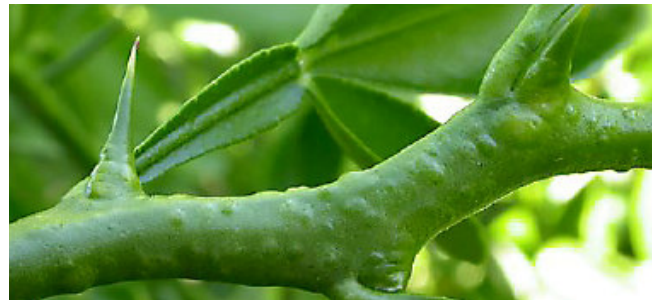
Affected twigs have soft, raised, spherical or irregular swellings, with numerous small, white larvae inside. Affected thorns are shortened, swollen and distorted.

Unlike CGW, *Eurytoma* galls are not woody, the larvae do not occur in circular cells and it can complete several generations per year.

Emergence holes associated with *Eurytoma* wasps can be apparent at ~20cm intervals on

stems in which several generations of the wasp have been completed.

Heavy infestation of soft terminal tissue causes cessation of growth, poor graft performance and production of regrowth shoots below damaged areas; the worst-affected twigs break off just below the growing point.



Top: Soft galls and a swollen thorn base caused by *Eurytoma*.
Bottom: Wasp emergence hole and typical galls.
Photos by Dan Papacek, Bugs for Bugs, Mundubbera.

Summary of current situation

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries is working with CSIRO to identify the wasp and with citrus consultants to establish the distribution of the wasp and the varieties which it attacks.

You can help to establish the distribution of the wasp by reporting damage or symptoms on citrus similar to that shown above.

To report suspect pests and diseases, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline:

1800 084 881

For further information, visit the Plant Standards web page:

www.dpi.vic.gov.au/psb