



PESTS & DISEASES

Citrus Gall Wasp

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Citrus Gall Wasp is native to Australia. Its range has expanded from its natural host to the Citrus trees we plant in the garden. The wasps are small and black, around 2 -3 mm long.

- They lay eggs in the soft new shoots of citrus trees, which form distinctive lumps as the larvae develop over 9 to 12 months.
- The fully grown wasps emerge from the galls leaving holes in the branch, which weakens the tree and leaves it open to infection. As the galls expand, the sap flow to the stem is interrupted. This usually leads to the growth beyond the gall becoming weak and unproductive, leading to leaf drop, poor fruiting and dieback.
- The adult wasps emerge from September to November and begin laying eggs which will become adults in the following year.
- They can't fly far, and tend to lay eggs back on the same tree but can spread between trees and gardens nearby.
- In warm summers we have seen evidence that a second generation may hatch around March/April.

Controlling the problem

You can't cure the gall once it's on the branch, so prevention is the best strategy.

- Remove any new galls from the tree as they begin to swell, pruning directly below the gall.
- Citrus Gall Wasp Traps: Hang a yellow sticky trap with a pheromone lure around infected trees from mid-August to November to trap emerging adult wasps.
- Kaolin Clay (such as Citrus Guard White Spray): This creates a barrier to stop the wasp laying eggs.
- You can switch your fertiliser regime from spring to autumn or early winter to avoid vigorous new growth when the adults are more likely to be around.

If you don't want to remove the branch (if it's a small tree or you're waiting to harvest a good crop), you can coat the gall in a horticultural glue to catch the new adults as they emerge, but this doesn't stop the damage and will require eventual removal.