

## Citrus Leafminer

### Lake County Factsheet

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Citrus leafminer, *Phyllocnistis citrella*, is a small moth that lays its eggs on the undersides of new growth flush leaves. When the eggs hatch, the larvae begin to feed between the layers of the leaf, creating the serpentine “mines” that distort the leaf. The larvae pupate in the mine in a rolled edge of the leaf. If enough damage is done to the leaf, it reduces photosynthesis, which can be bad for small trees with few leaves, but is not much of a problem on larger trees. The damage does not affect fruit except indirectly by reducing sugar production by the plant. Severe infestations can cause leaf drop and stem dieback. In Florida, a new generation is produced every three weeks and highest populations are in the spring and summer. The wound in the leaf created by the leafminer creates an entry point for citrus canker bacteria. Citrus Canker can cause lesions on leaves and fruit.

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/lake/>

## Management

There are natural enemies at work in the environment for you. However, they will never kill all the leafminers and a natural balance in populations should occur. Pesticides can kill the natural enemies. If you decide you need to control leafminers because the trees are small, apply horticultural spray oil at least twice, 10-14 days apart. Apply before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. to avoid burning the leaves. You only need to spray the bottom surface of the new flush leaves, not the rest of the canopy. Wait until you see the first signs of damage before deciding to spray. Apply when the flush is about halfway extended to kill the maximum number of larvae. This is primarily a problem on young trees. Mature trees can withstand some leafminer damage.

## Sources:

[https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_citrus\\_leafminer](https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_citrus_leafminer)

Photo with citrus canker: J D. Burrow, UF/IFAS

Photo of leafminer: J. Popenoe, UF/IFAS