

# season update

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## QUEENSLAND – MARCH 2006 REPORT

Although temperatures have eased as Autumn begins, the Central Burnett region continues to suffer a serious drought. Growers on both the Boyne and Burnett river systems have had to dig in the river bed for water. This water is often of poor quality and erratic supply. Without useful rainfall most growers will find it difficult to size the current crop. The prospects for next season's crop are not good.

**Red scale** is still troublesome in many blocks. However aphytis parasitism levels are continuing to improve with average levels of >65% parasitism being achieved in most blocks. While parasitism of available stages is much improved, the levels of live scale remain too high in many blocks with mature female scales producing large numbers of crawlers.

**Oriental spider mite** populations continue to be higher than any season since records have been kept. This phenomenon is probably related to the unusually hot and dry summer experienced. Conversely **rust mite** populations remain at uncharacteristically low levels for this time of the year.

Warm weather and ripening fruit mean that **fruit fly control** must be top priority for all growers. Baiting should be conducted twice weekly in susceptible blocks (imperials, navels, grapefruit and lemons). The remainder of the orchard and all perimeter areas should be receiving bait treatments once a week. In blocks where fruit fly control remains challenging, growers should further enhance their baits by including thickening agents. Contact your pest management consultant for further information.

Monitoring for **jassids** must be carried out at this time of year. Although some blocks have required treatments for jassids, populations remain at reasonable levels and damage levels have been generally low.

**Black spot** continues to feature in the regular monitoring assessments. It is expected that black spot levels will be high this year.

**Fruit thinning** is still an important issue. To maximise the benefit, all blocks should have their final thinning operation completed by the end of March.

**Colour break** is occurring in imperial mandarins in most areas. It appears that harvest may commence relatively early this year.

*Source: Dan Papacek, Bugs for Bugs*