



Agricultural Commissioner's Office
Weights & Measures ■ County of Santa Barbara

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NEWS RELEASE

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Light Brown Apple Moths Discovered in Carpinteria

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has positively identified 5 light brown apple moths from a single insect trap near the intersection of Casitas Pass Road and Shepard Mesa Road in Carpinteria. The detection of this many moths in a localized area will trigger State and Federal quarantines in the area surrounding the detections.

Light brown apple moth is a serious pest that originally came from Australia. It was first detected in California in 2007 and is now firmly established in California from Sonoma County to Monterey County. Although the adult moths are small (only 7-12 mm. in length) and cause no damage, the caterpillar stage of the moth is known to feed on over 2000 different plants.

This is sixth time light brown apple moth has been found in Santa Barbara County. Previous infestations have been eradicated using a mating disruption technique. The pheromone that attracts the male moths to the female moths has been isolated and is incorporated into plastic twist ties. These twist ties are then placed at a high density in the area where moths are known to occur. The amount of pheromone in the air prevents the males from finding and mating with the females and, since no reproduction takes place, the population dies off. This pheromone is highly specific to this species of moth and there are no known impacts on any other insects.

Homeowners are urged to cooperate with State and County personnel that will be placing additional insect traps and twist ties in the area. The quarantine will prohibit the movement of plants, fruits, and vegetables out of the quarantine area. The boundaries of the quarantine have not yet been established, but a map of the quarantine area will be posted at www.agcommissioner.com as soon as the area is defined.

In the meantime, residents of the area around Casitas Pass and Shepard Mesa Roads are asked to either consume any backyard fruit and produce, or dispose of it through commercial trash or green waste programs. Please do not transport or send any produce out of this area, particularly during the holiday season. For general information, click on the light brown apple moth link at www.cdfa.ca.gov. For specific questions about the quarantine regulations and insect identification, please contact the Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner's Office at (805) 681-5600.

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