



# The Backyard Orchard – Citrus Module 6.1 – Other Disorders: Bird, Thorn & Rodent Damage



LSU AgCenter Backyard Orchard Certificate  
Course

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# Bird Damage

- A lot of birds, especially grackles, damage citrus fruit by pecking and scratching.
- They are using the citrus oils from the peel on their feathers.
- This helps to waterproof their feathers and control pests such as mites.



Grackle



# Thorn Damage



- Puncture marks similar to bird beak damage
- Not very common
- Only on thorny citrus – primarily lemons and limes
- Usually there is a thorn nearby – movement in the wind causes the damage



# Biggest Concern



- Bird/thorn damaged fruit is still edible
- If wounds go all the way to the juice vesicles, it is an entry point for disease organisms or insects and will quickly decay and drop.
- Prune thorns near developing fruit to prevent thorn damage
- Cover with a bird net to prevent bird damage



# Rodent Damage

- Hollowed out fruit – often left hanging on the tree
- Gnaw the tender bark on limbs and trunks
- Most common culprit is the nocturnal roof rat (*Rattus rattus*)
- Prevention:
  - Traps (non-selective)
  - Eliminate habitat
  - Keep branches away from buildings







Please post all your questions and results to the message board that was emailed to you.

