

Daily Pilot

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Harmful insects, bacteria swarm C.M. citrus trees

California Department of Food and Agriculture workers are treating or removing trees with Asian citrus psyllids and the Huanglongbing bacteria they carry. But some residents are wary about the chemicals used to remove them.

BY SARA CARDINE

Some Costa Mesa residents are being notified citrus trees in their yards may need to be sprayed with insecticide or removed, after state agriculture officials confirmed the detection of harmful insects and a deadly bacterial disease on local properties.

But the solutions being provided by the state don't sit well with locals, who say they're concerned about the spraying of chemicals that could be hazardous to helpful garden insects and

animals.

Representatives from the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention division recently began surveying homes within a 250-meter radius of three detection sites near east side Costa Mesa's Elden Avenue and homes on the northeast end of town, near the 405 Freeway.

They are checking for signs of the bacterial disease Huanglongbing and the Asian citrus psyllid insects that ingest and spread HLB bacteria as they feed off cit-

rus trees leaves.

Victoria Hornbaker, director of the division, confirmed Friday four psyllid samples and one case of HLB have been detected at three sites since Nov. 3.

It's a concern, she said, because there is no known cure for HLB, which causes citrus greening and tree death by blocking nutrient absorption. Left unchecked, the highly spreadable disease could decimate backyard trees and even larger, commercial citrus

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Courtesy of California Department of Food and Agriculture

CITRUS FRUIT from a tree infected with Huanglongbing, a bacterial disease that ultimately kills plants by starving them of nutrients. The disease was recently detected in Costa Mesa.



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

SOPHIA ALCARAZ talks about how the Waymakers program saved her life, during the Waymakers 50th anniversary reception at UC Irvine. The Mission Viejo native entered the Waymakers Laguna Beach youth shelter when she was 15 and says the program gave her hope.

Waymakers marks 50 years of helping people in crisis

BY MATT SZABO

Waymakers, the Orange County nonprofit that helps people in crisis and conflict, celebrated its 50th anniversary with a reception on Thursday.

Held at the University Club at UC Irvine, it provided a couple of full-circle moments.

UC Irvine School of Social Ecology Dean Jon Gould remarked that it was appropriate the event was held on campus, considering Waymakers began with a pilot partnership between late UC Irvine professor Arnold Binder, a few of his students and a Costa Mesa Police Department captain in 1972.

The next year, funding allowed for the formation of the organization and paid staff.

More than 100 guests at Thursday's reception also heard from Sophia Alcaraz, who entered the Waymakers Laguna Beach youth shelter at age 15. At the time she entered the program, she said she was dealing

See **Years**, page A3



COSTA MESA Mayor John Stephens, Orange County Dist. Atty. Todd Spitzer and UCI School of Social Ecology Dean Jon Gould, from left, chat during the Waymakers 50th anniversary event.



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

THE PLAZA AREA at Vivante Newport Center, a new complex that has partnered with Hoag to cater to the growing population of seniors and focuses on proactive healthcare in Newport Beach and Orange County. The community features a number of amenities.

Hoag, Vivante team up to help Newport-Mesa seniors 'age in place'

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Hoag and Vivante recently announced the healthcare network and the assisted living and memory care provider are joining hands in a collaboration that allows residents to age in place.

Cory Alder, president of real estate development firm Nexus, the developer of Vivante, said the complex already provides a number of services that address medical needs as directed by the individual's primary physician and family, and offers daily living ac-

tivities, medicine management and grooming. But Vivante is not licensed to provide direct medical care.

That's where Hoag will come in.

"We believe we're best in class in our senior housing — the assisted living and medical care — and Hoag is obviously the best in class in the medical services," Alder said. "So, the collaboration provides what we do great for our residents on a daily basis, and

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Courtesy of city of Fountain Valley

BILL MCQUAID succeeds Ron Cookston as the new fire chief of Fountain Valley. He joined the city's fire department in 1996.

F.V.'s new fire chief continues his 'dream career'

BY ANDREW TURNER

Nearly three decades ago, Bill McQuaid made a promise that he has kept to this day.

Having grown up in Fountain Valley with a dream to join the fire service, McQuaid was ready to make a commitment to then Fire Chief Bernard Heimos if he hired him — he would stay at the same place his entire career.

"If somebody was going to give me that opportunity to get into it, then I was going to give them my all," McQuaid said of the promise he made that day. "Second, Fountain Valley is my home, so having the opportunity to serve in my dream career in my own hometown, in my own backyard, was an opportunity that I was willing to commit to for the entirety of my career."

McQuaid, who was brought on board as a full-time firefighter-paramedic in 1996, has been named the new fire chief of Fountain Valley. He was introduced to the community in his new role at the City Council meeting Tuesday night.

"That really touches me here, and we really appreciate your commitment to the city and this community," Councilman Patrick Harper said upon hearing Mc-

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ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP: PACIFICA CHRISTIAN ORANGE COUNTY BOYS' BASKETBALL EARNS BIG WIN PAGE A4

CITRUS

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growers.

“As the disease progresses you may see entire shoots of the tree turn yellow,” Hornbaker said. “The fruit will not be able to fully ripen, and it will take on a rancid taste. Eventually, the entire tree will die.”

Asian citrus psyllids were first detected in California in San Diego County near the border with Mexico and had, by 2009, moved to Orange and Los Angeles counties, according to Hornbaker. The first instance of HLB in Orange County was recorded in 2017.

“We’ve since found psyllids all throughout Southern California, so the region is generally considered infested,” she added.

“Their population grew so quickly we cannot conceivably eradicate the psyllids, so we focus our attention on the disease Huanglongbing the psyllids can carry.”

Protocols call for the surveying of lands within a 250-meter radius of a positive sample. If insects are discovered, CDEA employees will notify the owner of the property and recommend citrus trees be treated.

State approved insecticides used during a treatment — beta-cyfluthrin Tempo SC Ultra, pyrethroid Merit 2F or CoreTect, types of imidacloprid insecticides — are designed to kill adult and immature Asian citrus psyllids. Hornbaker said Friday all chemicals are regulated and registered safe for use around humans.

Homeowners and occu-

pants may refuse the treatment in cases where only insects have been discovered. But if workers detect HLB, there is no other recourse other than removal of the tree.

Costa Mesa resident Courtney Duncan, who lives on the 2600 block of Elden Avenue, received a pink slip on the door of her home on Elden Avenue Tuesday informing her any citrus trees on the property would need to be checked and potentially sprayed.

An avid organic gardener who’s studied and worked in the field of horticulture and botany, Duncan keeps many fruit and vegetable plants on her property, including a small Meyer lemon tree.

When she got the notice, she was worried about the health and safety of her non-citrus plants and the

insects who benefit the garden and said as much on the following day, when a representative returned to the area.

“I didn’t want any of that poison sprayed into the food I put in my body,” Duncan said Friday, expressing concern for her cat, which spends time outdoors.

The worker checked her property, overlooking the fruitless lemon tree, and left a slip indicating there was no citrus on site. Later, while working in her garden, she smelled something like paint in the air and felt dizzy.

Duncan said there are other solutions besides chemicals to manage plant pests, including water and soap applications, natural oil treatments and the use of beneficial insects that eat bad bugs.



ASIAN CITRUS
psyllids (ACP) adults can spread a deadly bacterial disease.

Courtesy of California Department of Food and Agriculture

She urged residents to look for early signs of disease and damage in their citrus trees that might be eradicated before it’s too late.

“Sometimes you can potentially stop the disease from getting into the whole tree,” she said. “It’s about knowing what to look for and how to keep trees heal-

thy.”

Hornbaker encouraged residents with questions or those who may have seen insects on their citrus trees or have a situation requiring attention, to call CDEA’s Pest Hotline at (800) 491-1999.

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SENIORS

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then with Hoag in our Vivante Hoag Wellness Center, we can provide doctors’ offices here on site, Hoag At Home specifically.”

Through the partnership, Alder said, Vivante can offer occupational therapy, physical therapy and hospice care. He noted the neurological departments at Hoag provide both support for the memory care community and education.

“Combining both of those organizations provides a complete program for the seniors in our community,” Alder said.

Hoag staff are available full time at the two Vivante campuses in Orange County: the Newport-Mesa location on Monrovia Avenue that opened in October 2013 and the second location on San Clemente Drive that opened in late November. Officials from Hoag and Vivante said the partnership allows for residents to remain in place for critical rehabilitation and medi-



THE VIVANTE NEWPORT CENTER has a bowling alley as one of its many amenities. The center also features an indoor pool, virtual golfing range and a number of dining options.

Don Leach | Staff Photographer

cal treatment and streamlines the transition from inpatient at Hoag to outpatient at Vivante.

“From the Hoag perspective, I think our goal is to help our senior citizens age

in place and Vivante offers a great service here. I think what we’re trying to do is make it so convenient for seniors to try and receive care that there’s no excuse for them not to,” said Jeff

Hammond, executive director of post-acute care at Hoag. “If they need primary care, if they need medication refills, our physicians are here and our team is here to really support the

Vivante staff.”

Hammond said Hoag picks up where Vivante’s licenses end.

“Anything that is more medical in nature, we can provide that, and it’s really just to make it so convenient for the residents and to build that community ... where they can stay here, can age in place and don’t have to go to a higher level of care,” said Hammond. “I think the biggest fear for seniors is going to skilled nursing or being taken out of the place they live, and we don’t want that fear for them.

“We want to create an environment where we know they can stay here, age in place and not have to go to a higher level of care.”

This also, Alder said, helps ease some of the burden on the medical care system, as having Hoag staff on site can help minimize unnecessary hospitalizations and provide preventive care.

The Vivante location near Fashion Island has 99 assisted living and memory care units. By comparison,

the Newport-Mesa location, when it initially opened, had about 185 units. An additional 111 units opened in August 2020.

Alder estimated seniors are renting 28 units at San Clemente Drive and roughly 330 at Monrovia Avenue. Monthly rates range, depending on the size of the unit, from \$5,000 to \$25,000.

The community features a number of amenities that include an indoor pool, bowling alley, virtual golfing range, gym, art studio, yoga studio, a dog park and a number of dining options. Alder noted all the units were designed to be accessible and come with full-service kitchens.

The partnership comes on the heels of Vivante’s 2021 launch of its Vivante Vitality Program, an eight-week series that tracks changes in physical, nutritional, cognitive and mental health for seniors who voluntarily participate.

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YEARS

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with issues like anxiety, suicidal thoughts and substance abuse.

“The foundation gave me hope, at a time in my life when I had none,” she said. “If my younger self could see me now, I would tell you that she would be absolutely flabbergasted, but so proud.”

A decade later, Alcaraz is a success story. The Mission Viejo native is co-founder of Lightning Creative, a marketing agency specialized on the real estate industry. A percentage of the company’s sales each month is given back to Waymakers.

“I’m a big believer in what comes around goes around,” she said. “I can’t really repay them for what they did for me, but I want to make that message known to other people. That way, they might be able to give back in ways that they can.”

Speakers at the reception also included Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley and Dist. Atty. Todd Spitzer, each of whom presented certificates to the organization.

Foley, whose District 5 includes Costa Mesa, Newport Beach and much of



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

EACH PLACE setting at the Waymakers’ 50th anniversary event included a decorated cookie.

south Orange County, said she’s done work with Waymakers on victim assistance, as well as educational work with students.

“We have a lot of Waymakers programs through the county of Orange,” Foley said. “They’re literally a direct partner with us to provide services related to homelessness and just a safety net for youth. They are so integral to the fabric of our safety net community of service providers that sometimes you don’t

even know that they’re involved. They’re just always there.”

In addition to its youth shelters in Laguna Beach, Huntington Beach and Tustin, Waymakers opened a fourth shelter for young adults last year, also in Tustin.

That Crisis Residential Program is for people ages 18 to 25, known as a Transition Age Youth, said program director Lisa Samaan.

“At that point, they’re ag-

ing out of their home, so their risk of homelessness is really high,” she said. “Also, that is the time where we see a lot of budding mental health disorders. We’re able to do a little bit more of early adulthood intervention, in terms of mental health support ... and provide them support in pursuing whichever avenue they want to go.”

Annie Stawicki, the president of the Waymakers Board of Directors, is a Costa Mesa resident. She said she’s proud of the progress the organization has made in the last 50 years and excited about the opportunities to come in the next 50 years.

“We’ve been meeting as a board, putting together a strategic plan,” she said. “We really want to intentionally set our path. What does that mean? We want to stay focused on what we do well, but a big part of us also wants to take responsibility for training others to do this line of work as well. It’s a pretty exciting time, really, and I think the 50th anniversary makes us focus on what we are doing, what we have done and what are our opportunities for the future.”

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CHIEF

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Quaid’s story at the meeting. “What a great promise to have like that on board.”

After joining the Fountain Valley Fire Department as a reserve, McQuaid also held the roles of fire engineer, fire captain, battalion chief and division chief of operations. He now succeeds Ron Cookston, another homegrown product, as fire chief.

With its blend of blue- and white-collar work, the fire service appealed to McQuaid for its various challenges.

“Over the last five to seven years, I’ve traveled up and down the state of California as a strike team leader, responding to multiple of the largest fires in California history,” McQuaid said. “[It involved] leading teams of firefighters

fighting these fires in extreme, adverse conditions 24 hours a day on the front lines of the fire, just putting in that hard work to make a difference to save homes and communities.”

Those efforts included fighting the Thomas fire in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, which ignited in late December 2017 and was deemed contained the following January, as well as the Dixie fire that raged in Northern California from July to October 2021.

On the administrative side, McQuaid found himself involved with setting up vaccination centers during the coronavirus pandemic.

McQuaid, 54, lives with his family in Huntington Beach. He graduated from Fountain Valley High in 1986.

City Manager Maggie Le said McQuaid will earn a base salary of \$241,308.

As fire chief, McQuaid said he wants to prioritize support for first responders by giving them the tools to do their work and provide “concierge level” service to the community.

“Right now, we’re partnering with our local high schools here in the city,” McQuaid said. “With the large-scale opioid and fentanyl usage that’s going on and the adverse results that are coming out of that, we’ve partnered with our high schools to train the teachers and train the high school staff how to respond to those emergencies.

“We’re providing them with the Narcan, which is the medication that we provide to help offset the effects of opioids, to the high schools so that they can get rapid response, even before we can get there to help us in the process of saving lives.”

Bettering himself

through education was important to McQuaid. He earned his master’s degree in public safety leadership and executive management from Arizona State University last year. McQuaid hopes he has set an example for others in his department to continue their pursuit of higher education.

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