

# New genetically engineered virus to protect Florida's citrus come 2019

The Agriculture Department is expected to allow Florida citrus growers to start using a genetically engineered virus to protect trees from citrus greening disease in early 2019.

USDA is planning to issue a statewide permit once the virus is ready, likely in January 2019.

Citrus greening has nearly wiped out Florida's citrus industry. The disease, which currently does not have a cure, has infected almost all of the state's groves over the past decade, resulting in small, under-ripe fruit.

The state's production has plummeted as a result.

USDA is expecting Florida growers to produce just 50 million boxes of oranges in 2017-2018, 39 percent smaller than the harvest in 2015-2016.

The GE virus, which would make trees resistant to the disease, is being developed by Southern Gardens Citrus Nursery.

**Lien article :** <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/185346/New-genetically-engineered-virus-to-protect-Floridas-citrus-come-2019>