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## AGRICULTURE

# Let the citrus-planting begin

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If you can find citrus trees from a nursery and want to risk planting, your wait is over.

Florida Agriculture Commissioner Charles Bronson lifted the ban Tuesday on replanting citrus trees, which were chain-sawed in the controversial canker eradication program.

"It is important that commercial growers be allowed to replant if the industry is to remain viable," Bronson said in a statement. "Residents must be treated equally."

Replanted trees must come from a registered nursery.

During the decade of the now defunct eradication program, the state cut more than 800,000 residential citrus trees, mostly in South Florida.

Bronson's announcement came at the same time the U.S. Department of Agriculture released its first draft of how commercial citrus growers may have to live with citrus canker and other diseases. The highly technical 21-page document is a "road map," said Bronson aide Liz Compton, not a final set of rules.

The USDA draft came two months after the agency bailed out of the canker eradication program, leaving commercial and residential citrus owners wondering how to deal with canker.

The USDA said there must be new standards for limiting the spread of the disease through clothing, equipment and vehicles, canker-free citrus nurseries, strict inspections before harvesting, and continued surveillance for citrus diseases.