



Arcadia neighborhood concerned over roof rats

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PHOENIX (KSAZ) -

It is citrus time in Arizona; trees are full of oranges, lemons, grapefruits, and limes. But people need to make sure they pick the fruit or get ready for some unwanted visitors.

Roof rats, they're back. Some residents in Arcadia fear this year could be made worse by a citrus quarantine.

Arcadia is built among citrus orchards, and there are trees everywhere. Last year a citrus quarantine stopped many food banks and other organizations from accepting donated citrus. So that leaves a lot of unwanted citrus in neighborhoods across the Valley.

"The community overall has roofrats everywhere, the good news is we know how to deal with them, and they're easier to deal with than gophers and pigeons," said Barry Pacely.

Pacely once headed up the Arcadia Citrus Program, which over the last 14 years has collected millions of pounds of fruit and donated it. This year they had to suspend the program. A citrus quarantine due to the Asian Citrus Psyllid fears prompted many food banks to stop collecting citrus for fear of spreading the destructive pest.

So does that mean there will be a bigger roof rat problem because of the fruit that stays on the trees this year? Not if you're proactive said Pacely.

"You want to use the trapping, the poisons, different things," he said.

As for the fruit many in Valley neighborhoods set it in a box on a table and give it away. Others like Jerry Bull try to sell it.

"I have seen a couple of rats this year, we have a cat, she kind of takes care of them for us," said Jerry Bull.

Pacely, who has 12 citrus trees in his yard, says they are doing what they can to use the fruit.

"We're doing more juicing this year, we're going to put that aside for the summertime, we're doing more recycling, we're using the City of Phoenix mulching containers, so it goes to mulch and not to the dumps," said Pacely.