Department of Primary Industries
and Regional Department

Primefact

Bacterial spot

September 2024, Primefact PUB24/856, first edition

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Bacterial spot, caused by *Xanthomonas arboricola* pv. *pruni*, is a disease that causes spotting on plum, apricot and peach leaves and fruit.

Disease identification

Fruit infected with bacterial spot will have small, circular, greasy spots that will sink and darken as the fruit enlarges. These spots often crack, providing entry points for secondary diseases. Similar greasy or water-soaked spots can be seen on the leaves of infected trees (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Bacterial spot on leaves.

Damage

Up to half the fruit can become unsaleable due to cosmetic damage. Extensive leaf spotting results in ripped and tattered foliage.

Monitoring

Monitor leaves and fruit throughout the season to ensure early detection, as the infection is difficult to control once established. Wet conditions between blossom and petal fall favour infection on peaches and nectarine leaves and fruit. Windy, wet conditions and heavy dew during the growing season will also favour secondary infections. Extra caution is recommended during these conditions.

Management

Cultural and physical: trees suffering from other pests and diseases are more susceptible to bacterial spot. Maintain soil fertility and good pest management. Destroy any nearby neglected trees as they can act as a source of inoculum for the disease. Do not prune during wet weather.

Biological: there are currently no known biological control agents for bacterial spot.

Chemical: control options for bacterial spot in NSW are limited. However, applying a full control schedule for leaf curl, shot hole and rust, which includes an early-season copper application, should help control bacterial spot.

Chemical: check the APVMA PubCRIS database for registered controls (https://portal.apvma.gov.au/pubcris).

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Dr Amanda Warren-Smith for her editorial and publication skills in producing this Primefact.

ISSN: 1832-6668