

## Managing sooty blotch of citrus

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### Symptoms

Sooty blotch is a rind blemish caused by growth of the fungus *Gloeodes pomigena* developing over the fruit surface. The grey to black fungal strands give the appearance of a light dusting of soot which can be removed by vigorous rubbing. The fungal growth is mostly superficial, rupturing the cuticle but not penetrating the epidermis of the fruit.

The disease is normally only a problem under wet and shaded conditions and is commonly seen during autumn and winter in coastal areas. Mature fruit on the inside or southern side of the tree canopy are most affected.

### Control

A regular pruning program will ensure better air circulation and light penetration into the canopy, which will reduce the incidence of sooty blotch.

Some control of sooty blotch is achieved in citrus through the application of copper fungicides used to control other fungal diseases, such as melanose and black spot. During wet conditions an additional application of copper in autumn will reduce sooty blotch as well as controlling *Phytophthora* brown rot and snails.



For smooth skinned varieties sooty blotch will normally be removed by the brushes in the packing line. However it is more difficult to remove from fruit with rough or pebbly textured skin.

### References

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