

Citrus blast

Agfact H2.AB.6, First Edition, 1983
A.L. Bertus, Special Plant Pathologist
Division of Plant Industries
(Reviewed April 2004)

Citrus blast is a bacterial disease that is not common in New South Wales but occurs occasionally in the south-west of the State.

CAUSE

The bacterium *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *syringae*

SYMPTOMS

Rapidly spreading dark brown blotches develop on the young growth, usually originating at the base of the leaf blade or at the axillary bud (Figure 1). The lesions spread involving adjacent stem and leaf tissue. Shoots may become completely girdled and blighted and leaves die, remaining attached to the stem (Figure 2). Nursery stocks may be blighted and ringbarked, the symptoms being somewhat similar to those caused by *Phytophthora* attack. Lesions heal up with the onset of warm or dry weather. Fruit infection is seen occasionally in lemons (Figure 3) and mandarins but only rarely in oranges.

HOST RANGE

This organism can attack a wide variety of plants, causing diseases such as blossom blight of pears, gummosis of stone fruit (especially apricots and cherries), a leaf spot of beans and blights of lilac and hibiscus.

SOURCE OF INFECTION

This bacterium is widely distributed, occurring naturally on plant surfaces.

FAVoured BY

Young growth that has not completely matured or hardened off before winter is most susceptible. Slight



Figure 1. Citrus blast affecting twig of Washington - , Navel orange. Note dark affected tissue around leaf base.

injury to tissues, such as occurs during wind, driving rain, sandblasting and frost, facilitates entry of the bacteria into the tissue. Several days of rain appear to be required for infection to take place.

Figure 2. Washington Navel orange twigs blighted by citrus blast. The leaves remain withered and attached to stem.

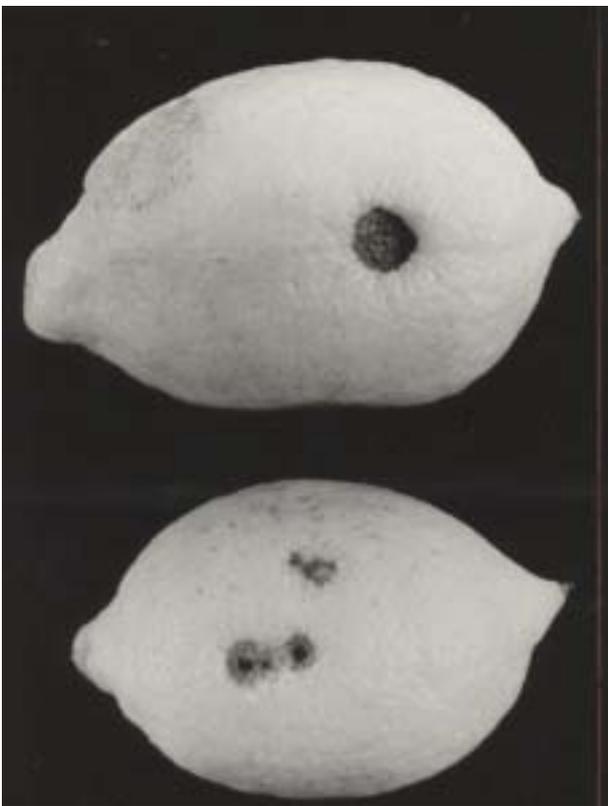


Figure 3. Lemon fruit showing lesions caused by the citrus blast bacterium.

DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of review (April 2004.) However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of New South Wales Department of Agriculture or the user's independent adviser.