Brown collar rot of citrus

Department of Agriculture, Western Australia
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BROWN ROT OF CITRUS

Infection of fruit and foliage by brown rot fungi (Phytophthora spp.) occurs after opening rains in autumn. It can continue during periods of wet weather until spring.

The disease develops first on Washington navel oranges, lemons and mandarins and later on Valencia oranges. Grapefruit are rarely infected.

Spores of the fungi are readily splashed by rain from the soil onto fruit and leaves touching or hanging close to the ground.

SYMPTOMS

Fruit—Infected oranges and mandarins develop a greyish-brown firm rot and drop to the ground. With lemons and grapefruit the rot is yellowish-brown. In some instances rotted oranges and lemons feature a central island or "button" of apparently normal rind. Diseased fruit give off a characteristic odour.

Leaves—Infection commonly occurs at tip or margin. Blighted areas turn dark brown or greyish-brown. During prolonged wet weather whole shoots may be blighted, particularly on lemons. Infected leaves fall readily, even though still green over most of their surface.

CONTROL

Prune trees so lowest branches when weighted with fruit, are at least a foot above the soil.

Keep down tall weed or cover crop growth beneath spread of branches.

Spray lower two-thirds of trees before autumn rains commence (mid to end April). Use:—

Bordeaux mixture 8-12-100

or

Copper oxychloride* 4 lb

or

Cuprous oxide† 3½ lb in

100 gallons

of water

Add a spreader-sticker to improve spray coverage and retention. Do not use white oil for this purpose in districts prone to water spot.

In years of above-average rainfall a second application of copper oxychloride or cuprous oxide should be made in late winter (end July to early August), particularly on lemons and Valencia oranges. The one Bordeaux mixture spray should suffice for the season.


† Available as "Copper Nordox".

By the PLANT PATHOLOGY BRANCH