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Plant diseases : bacterial gall of Oleander

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OLEANDER is an attractive evergreen shrub which will grow in all but the coldest districts of Western Australia. Unfortunately it is affected by a bacterial disease which causes unsightly malformation or galling of all above ground parts.

The organism causing this disease is the bacterium Pseudomonas tonelliana Ferraris.

Symptoms

On the younger shoots the disease forms longitudinal swellings which split open and result in dark brown cankers. These cankers or galls increase in size with the continued growth of the shrub until the wood matures. When infection takes place on older stems, the swellings tend to be isolated and circular in shape.

Leaf galls may form on either surface opposite the galls. This pitting causes leaf blade distortion.

Symptoms on the floral parts depend on the stage of development at the time of infection. If the seed pods have started to form when infection occurs they become curved and distorted but produce normal seed. If the attack occurs at an earlier stage of floral development, the immature pods become somewhat bottle-shaped and contain aborted seed.
Development and Spread

The organism appears to gain entrance to the plant through mechanical wounds caused by such things as pruning or through injuries caused by the feeding activities of insects.

Control

The following measures will help reduce the amount of unsightly galling on oleanders.

1. Prune out and burn all diseased parts. Disinfect the pruning shears or secateurs between each cut.

2. Control any insects attacking the plant with appropriate insecticides.

3. Always use healthy material when propagating oleanders.

SALTLAND NOTES

WHERE DO SHEEP CAMP IN SUMMER?

Where do sheep camp in summer? Ask any farmer. That is any farmer who hasn't fenced off his saltpatches.

Sheep always camp in salty areas if they're available—with the result that nothing has a chance to grow.

That is why fencing is so important in any programme of saltland treatment.