Gum spots on citrus leaves

Department of Agriculture, Western Australia

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GUM SPOTS on citrus leaves are one of many types of leaf spots which prompt numerous enquiries from citrus growers. Although they are fairly characteristic in appearance they are often confused with spots due to other causes, such as fungi, spray chemicals and so on.

Symptoms

Gum spots are slightly raised, resinous brown in colour and tend to darken with age to resemble a spot of dried gum. Individually they are roughly circular in shape and rarely if ever penetrate to the opposite side of the leaf. In size they vary from a small speck to about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. across, and often coalescence of the spots occurs to form a large blotch. The surrounding leaf tissue is generally bleached.

With rare exceptions the spots are found on the under-surface of curled or rolled leaves. Such leaves may be found in any part of the tree but are much more prevalent on the northern half.

Cause

From observations made over many years it has not been possible to associate gum spots with parasitic diseases. On the other hand all evidence suggests an association with climatic conditions.
The trouble seems to be initiated by low temperatures or cold winds which cause leaves to curl or roll and thus expose the under-surfaces. These surfaces are sensitive to the sun's rays and on the northern halves of the trees in particular, they become sunburnt with consequent leaf bleaching and formation of gum spots.

Control

Being a result of adverse weather conditions, control in the orchard is not practicable. In any event there is no evidence to suggest the problem is sufficiently serious to justify attempts at control.
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