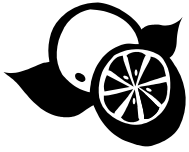
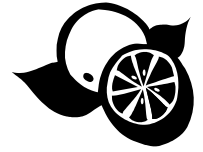


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Citrus Scab



This fungal disease produces symptoms on leaves, twigs and fruit, but the symptoms on the fruit are far more noticeable. The skin is marked with irregular greyish, scabby areas and wart-like outgrowths may also occur. The fruit is still perfectly edible although not as attractive due to the scarring caused by the infection.

Although the interior of the fruit is undamaged, this disease should be controlled because damage to twigs will adversely affect the structure of the tree and eventually causes the tree to become unproductive.

Lemon fruit with citrus scab are often very large. This is because the disease causes some fruit fall thus reducing the load on the tree so it directs more energy into the remaining fruit.

The first signs of infection on a leaf are small rounded areas, raised on one leaf surface and indented on the underside. Brownish, pinkish or greyish scabs develop on these protuberances. The leaf may even become distorted if many scabs occur together.

The fungal spores are produced on the scabs and spread by wind-driven rain and insects. Cool damp weather, particularly if it follows a dry spell, is favourable to disease development. Fruit is susceptible only up to about ten weeks after half petal fall.

All varieties of lemon including the common lemon are affected. Limes, sour oranges, calamondins, some varieties of tangelo and “Unshiu” mandarins are also subject to infection. The foliage of other mandarin varieties are susceptible to infection in cool wet Spring weather. Sweet orange varieties rarely suffer from this disease.

Control of citrus scab is somewhat difficult as it involves a spraying program that needs to be followed closely. Timing of the spraying is extremely important for effective control.

Start in the Spring when about half the petals have fallen from the flowers. Use Copper oxychloride at the rate of 2.5g per litre of water and add 6ml of white oil per litre. Spray this mixture several times spaced at two weekly intervals for two months. A follow up application should be then carried out in February also at about half petal fall. Use Mancozeb® this time at the rate of 2g per litre of water or at the rate recommended by the manufacturer. Several repeat sprayings are needed this time also, spaced two weeks apart again, for about two months.

Fruit already damaged by the disease will still continue to look distorted and scabby as the damage to the skin is permanent, however they are still perfectly alright to eat. New fruit produced after treatment should continue to grow and look normal if treatment is done regularly.