Tim Hurner, Highlands County Citrus Extension Agent

Some Facts About -   Citrus Black Spot

(Excerpted from UF/IFAS Fact Sheet PP-213 "Citrus Disease Exotic to Florida: Black Spot by Dr. K.R. Chung, Dr. N.A. Peres, and Dr. L.W. Timmer; rev. March 2009)

Citrus Black Spot Background

- An important fungal disease of citrus worldwide in Southeast Asia, Africa, South America, and Australia
- Causes a necrotic lesion that results in elimination factor for fresh fruit, and can cause premature fruit drop reducing yield for both fresh and processed fruit.
- Climatic conditions in Florida are favorable for Citrus Black Spot.

Causal Agent

- *Guignardia citricarpa*, (sexual stage); a fungus.

Cultivars Affected

- All citrus cultivars
- Lemons, grapefruit, limes, and mandarins are most susceptible.
- Late maturing varieties suffer most severely due to premature fruit drop.
- Sour Orange and Tahiti lime are not susceptible.

Symptoms

- Black spot lesions on the rind of fruit, that begin as small orange or red spots with black margins, that later become necrotic lesions.

Transmission

- Transmission requires: susceptible fruit, abundance of inoculum, and warm wet climatic conditions.
- Primary source of infection is ascospores produced on leaves on the ground.
- Ascospores are ejected during rain or irrigation splashing on to fruit during late spring and summer.
- Fruit is susceptible for 4 – 5 months after petal fall. Symptoms may not appear until fruit matures.

Detection

- Latency may take several months between inoculation and symptom expression.
- Fruit symptoms first appear.
- Positive confirmation requires a pathogenicity test.

Control

- Properly timed sprays including Copper, mancozeb, or strobilurin fungicides.
- Up to 5 sprays during the period of susceptibility.
- Removal of dead leaves in groves reduces inoculum potential.

Pictures

Provided by Dr. Mongi Zekri
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Black Spot on citrus fruit caused by *Guignardia citricarpa*.

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