

CITRUS DISEASE SPOTLIGHT

Greasy spot

By Megan Dewdney

The time from late spring to early summer is when the majority of greasy spot infections occur. Greasy spot is most problematic on fresh grapefruit, but it should be a concern for all citrus species. While rind blotch is the greatest concern for fresh fruit, significant leaf loss caused by greasy spot can reduce the ability of trees of any type to photosynthesize. Over time, trees can be weakened and are no longer able to support large numbers of fruit.

Scientific name: *Mycosphaerella citri*

Leaf symptoms: Symptoms generally appear in the early winter, but can take longer if the temperatures are cold. At first, the leaves have a mottled appearance, especially on the lower surface. Brown patches form within the mottle, especially on the underside of the leaves, and remain surrounded by a yellow halo (Fig. 1). As the lesions develop, they become visible on both sides of the leaves and have the appearance of grease spots (Fig. 2). If infection is severe, leaves can drop before the brown lesions occur.

Fruit
Symptoms: The fruit lesions are frequently referred to as rind blotch. Rind blotch is composed of a large number of black pin-point lesions between the oil glands. Light infec-

tions can lead to diffuse blotches (Fig. 3), but more severe infections can greatly discolor the rind (Fig. 4). The cells surrounding the lesions can retain their chlorophyll for longer, and can fail to color properly. Occasionally, larger blotchy, slightly sunken areas occur on grapefruit and are termed pink pitting.

Valencias for processing generally only need one application from the period of mid-May to early-June. On grapefruit or early- to mid-season oranges, applications should start in mid-May to early June, and the first application could also control melanose if copper is used. The second application should occur when the major summer flush has expanded, usually mid-June to early July. In most years, one or two applications would be sufficient for most situations. However, if rind blotch on fresh fruit has been problematic in previous years, a third application in August may be needed. A copper residue model is available to improve copper application timing at <http://www.agroclimate.org/tools/cudecay/>. More details can be found in the Florida Citrus Pest Management Guide (<http://www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/pest/>).

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Fig. 1. Young greasy spot lesions with yellow halos on the top of a grapefruit leaf



Fig. 2. Greasy spot symptoms on the underside of a grapefruit leaf

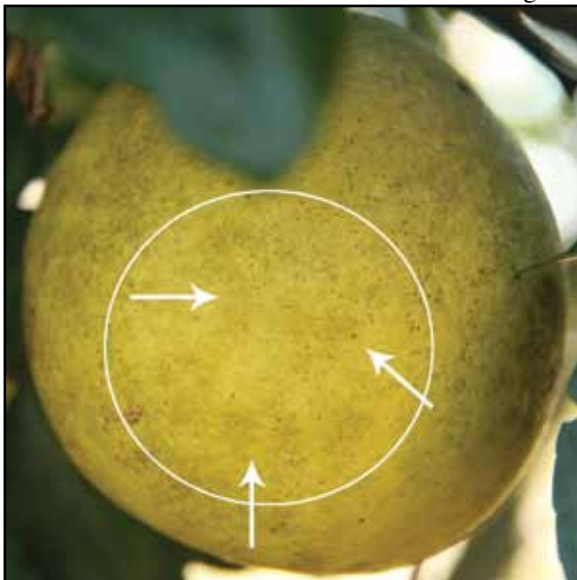


Fig. 3. Mild rind blotch (within circle) on grapefruit



Fig. 4. Severe rind blotch symptoms on grapefruit