Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Backyard Buddies
Your monthly guide to pests, diseases and weeds

Let's talk citrus

Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly) and larvae in grapefruit

Citrus gallwasp gall formation

Maggots in your fruit, scale on your trees, spots on your leaves, pests doing as they please?
It is disheartening when problems like these pop up in beloved citrus trees, but with a keen eye and some TLC, you can detect and prevent these pests getting out of hand.

INSECT PESTS

Keep a lookout for *citrus gall wasp,* a native pest to Australia's Eastern states, has now established in Perth WA. By June, the tell-tale swellings or "galls" will be present on the younger branches of citrus trees. These indicate the presence of this pest.

Fruit fly season is upon us (when isn't it!). Look for tiny sting marks on the fruit rind and check ripening fruit for maggots (especially mandarins and navel oranges). Maggots grow up to 8 mm long and are thin, partially transparent and cream in colour.

Citrus leafminers are responsible for those silvery, squiggly lines on leaves. Caused by tunnelling moth larvae, the damage causes the leaves to twist and curl. The larva then pupates in the curled leaf for protection.

Sap-sucking insects like *scale* and *mealybugs* (small, white to dark bumps on trunk, foliage and fruits) suck plant juices with specialised mouth parts, producing a sticky excreta called honeydew in the process. This will drip on the branches and leaves, in which sooty mould will establish.

Another sap sucker, *Aphids,* are 1-3mm long, pear shaped insects, and commonly found when there is flushing growth; during September/October, and February to April. They also excrete honeydew and it's often the sooty mould that will catch your eye before you spot the aphids.

Citrus leafminer

Red scale on lemons

Citrus canker on lime (exotic)

DISEASES

We are always on the lookout for diseases of citrus. Please report signs of disease, such as any blister-like lesions on leaves, stems and fruit. Lesions can be raised, tan, brown or black in colour, and surrounded by an oily water-soaked margin with a yellow ring or halo. Also monitor trees for defoliation, premature fruit drop, decreased fruit yield, and twig dieback.

OTHER PROBLEMS

Other common citrus-related problems are usually manageable with a little TLC. *Fruit-splitting* is believed to be caused by climatic and soil moisture irregularities. Its speculated that the rapid uptake of water swells the pulp, causing the rind to split.

Fruit drop can be minimised by managing factors like over-fertilising, water stress, sunburn, excessive winds, and nutritional deficiencies. It is best to research optimal pH and nutrient content of soils if problems such as these are noticed.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information about these pests, their control and other citrus disorders can be found on our website agric.wa.gov.au or contact our Pest and Disease Information Service if you require assistance.

Reporting unfamiliar pests
Use the **MyPestGuide™** Reporter app or online tool at **mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au**; or contact the Pest and Disease Information Services (PaDIS): **(08) 9368 3080**, **padis@dpird.wa.gov.au**