

BLACK SCALE, *Saissetia oleae*

Adult Size: 3–5 mm

Biology and damage: This species is widely distributed in Australia. First generation crawlers normally emerge in late spring-early summer, earliest in the north. Two or three generations occur per year, with more in northern parts. Hot, dry weather reduces the survival of crawlers. Scales attack leaves and twigs, resulting in leaf drop, reduced tree vigour and twig dieback in heavy infestations. Ants and sooty mould are commonly associated with the production of honeydew by adults and nymphs of black scale. The movement of ants up a trunk is indicative of active black scale in the tree, even if the scales are not obvious.



Major natural enemies: Black scale has many natural enemies that can play an important role in its management in olive groves. These include small parasitic wasps such as *Metaphycus* spp. and *Scutellista caerulea*; ladybirds, lacewing larvae and the scale-eating caterpillar. Parasitised scales may show exit holes once the wasps have emerged.

Management: If required, black scale can be targeted by judicious use of spray oils or insect growth regulators. Sprays need to be targeted at crawlers and young nymphal stages, so timing is critical for effective management. This makes monitoring for crawler development important. Opening up tree canopies exposes crawlers to greater likelihood of dehydration, and also to access by sprays targeted against them. Management of black scale will reduce ant problems, and vice-versa.



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