

# PEACOCK SPOT (Olive Leaf Spot)

Caused by *Fusicladium oleaginum* (*Spilocaea oleaginea*)

## Biology and damage

Occurs worldwide and is the most common disease of olives. This disease is common in regions that experience wet and humid spring conditions – particularly coastal and warm temperate regions of Australia. Infection of leaves occurs mostly in winter & spring during wet weather (optimum temperatures 15-21°C, >98% Relative Humidity and a wet leaf surface for 1-2 days). Spores cannot germinate >25°C. Infections can remain dormant until autumn if conditions are dry – called a 'latent infection'. After periods of wet weather lesions develop and conidia (spores) form on the leaf surface. Spores spread with water splash & with insects such as bookworms (Order *Psocoptera*) which live in leaf litter & on leaves. Olive varieties differ in susceptibility – e.g. *Hojiblanca*, *Picual*, *Arbequina* & *Manzanillo* are more susceptible; *Lecchino* is more resistant.



Spots can develop a dark outline, concentric markings or a yellow halo. Infected leaves yellow before dropping.



Under moist weather conditions developing fruit can also be infected – although this isn't common

## Management

Prune branches to open tree canopy to air and sun. Remove or cover dropped leaves with compost - or shred leaves and apply N fertiliser to hasten breakdown in winter. Timing is important for fungicide application when wet weather is expected (especially in late winter & spring). Grow tolerant olive varieties. Maintain balanced plant nutrition in spring – high nitrogen and low potassium levels in leaves favour infection.