

Plum pox virus

What is plum pox virus?

Plum pox virus (also known as Sharka) is caused by the *Plum pox potyvirus*. It infects many *Prunus* spp., though there may be different strains of the virus that are host specific. It is one of the highest threats to the summerfruit industry and, should it become established in Australia, would cause significant yield losses, quality issues and loss of markets.

What should I look for?

Symptoms of mottling, spotting and yellowing can occur on leaves, fruit and tree trunks. Some may be confused with abiotic stress symptoms such as nutrient deficiency.

Plum pox virus can affect fruit quality, including causing reduced size of fruit, lower sugar content and production of tasteless or bitter fruit.

What can it be confused with?

Because the symptoms of Plum pox virus are so variable depending on season and location, it can be confused with other virus or physiological stress symptoms. Ultimately, the virus needs to be confirmed in plant tissue in a laboratory using molecular identification techniques. If symptoms such as those described in this factsheet are seen, get them checked.

How does it spread?

Spread within orchards or to neighbouring orchards occurs via aphid vectors such as *Aphis spiraecola* and *Myzus persicae*. Long distance dispersal (and the most likely means of entry into Australia) is through illegal importation of propagation material that has been grafted with wood from infected *Prunus* trees.



The aphid vector *Myzus persicae*

Scott Bauer, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org



Virus symptoms on plum leaves

Biologische Bundesanstalt für Land- und Forstwirtschaft Archive, Bugwood.org



Vein clearing symptoms in peach leaves

Biologische Bundesanstalt für Land- und Forstwirtschaft Archive, Bugwood.org



Where is it now?

Plum pox virus is widespread throughout Europe and was found in Chile in 1992, but has since been eradicated.

How can I protect my orchard from Plum pox virus?

Source plant material only from 'clean', accredited suppliers, and preferably material that is certified. Check your orchard frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common summerfruit diseases so you can tell if you see something different.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline

**EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**



Spotting on apricot stones

European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization Archive, Bugwood.org



Chlorotic spots on peach fruit

European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization Archive, Bugwood.org



Severe symptoms on plum fruit

Biologische Bundesanstalt für Land- und Forstwirtschaft Archive, Bugwood.org

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