

Mycosphaerella Leaf Spot of *Scaevola taccada*

A. Daly and C. Hennessy, Plant Pathology, Diagnostic Services, Darwin

INTRODUCTION

Mycosphaerella scaevolae is an exotic (introduced) fungal pathogen that causes leaf spot disease in *Scaevola* species. It was discovered in Darwin in 2006 on coastal plantings of the shrub *Scaevola taccada*. This is the first time the disease has been found in Australia. It is also found in Hawaii where it infects, apart from *S. taccada*, other species including *S. chamissoniana*, *S. glabra* and *S. mollis*.



HOST PLANTS

Scaevola taccada is a native plant of the Top End, Western Australia, Queensland and other tropical locations of the world. It is a small tree or shrub growing to 2-3 m tall and occurs in coastal areas on sand dunes and on the edges of mangrove forests. Other species of *Scaevola* do occur in Australia, particularly in Western Australia, where they are found throughout.

DISEASE

M. scaevolae infects the host through natural openings in the leaves (stomata). Spores of the fungus are then produced on the lower surface of leaves and can be spread by wind, water droplets or by movement of infected material (i.e., cuttings). Infection results in large yellow (chlorotic) spots on leaves, which develop a brown (necrotic) centre with age.



MANAGEMENT

Even though *M scaevolae* is exotic to Australia, it is of minor concern and eradication has not been considered. It does not appear to cause significant harm to established plants growing naturally or planted for amenity purposes. There is potential for disease to be a significant problem of plants growing in a nursery situation, but the economic significance is unknown. Control could be achieved by removal and disposal of badly affected leaves and treatment of the remaining foliage with appropriate curative and protective fungicides.

Please contact Plant Pathology on 89 992 162 for further advice.

REFERENCES

Anon (1992). Flora of Australia Online: *Scaevola taccada*. *Flora of Australia* Volume 35, Australian Biological Resources Study

<http://www.anbg.gov.au>

Anon (1998). The Western Australian Flora: *Scaevola*. Flora Base, Western Australian Herbarium. Department of Environment and Conservation.

<http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au/>

Brock (1988). Top End Native Plants. John Brock (ISBN 0 7316 0859 3).

Gonsalves, A. K. and Ferreira, S. A. (1994). *Mycosphaerella* Primer. University of Hawaii

<http://www.extento.hawaii.edu>

Please visit us at our website:

www.nt.gov.au/dpifm

Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines

© Northern Territory Government

ISSN 0157-8243

Serial No. 835

Agdex No. 637

Disclaimer: While all care has been taken to ensure that information contained in this Agnote is true and correct at the time of publication, the Northern Territory of Australia gives no warranty or assurance, and makes no representation as to the accuracy of any information or advice contained in this publication, or that it is suitable for your intended use. No serious, business or investment decisions should be made in reliance on this information without obtaining independent/or professional advice in relation to your particular situation.